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# CANNIBALS AND CONVICTS.

# Cannibals & Convicts:

NOTES OF

*Personal Experiences in the Western Pacific.*

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BY

JULIAN THOMAS,

("*THE VAGABOND,*")

*Author of "The Vagabond Papers," "Occident and Orient," "South Sea Massacres," &c. &c.*

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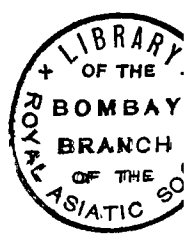
WITH PORTRAITS AND MAP.

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To the Memory

OF

SIR ARTHUR EDWARD KENNEDY, G.C.M.G., C.B.,

WHO AS GOVERNOR OF QUEENSLAND AND HER MAJESTY'S REPRESENTATIVE
ANNEXED EASTERN NEW GUINEA

TO

THE EMPIRE OF GREAT BRITAIN.

# PREFACE.

For many years of my life I have travelled to and fro in the Pacific Ocean, first as a vagabond globe-trotter, and afterwards as a journalist. It has been my privilege to make acquaintance with many dusky monarchs and chieftains, from King Kalakaua, of Hawaii, to Boe Vagi, of New Guinea.

In a recently-published volume of travel, the author sneers at the ignorance displayed by some of the Australian papers with regard to the Islands of the Western Pacific, and he is rather severe upon newspaper correspondents generally. On behalf of the Australian press and English journalism I join issue. In our own day, in the sphere of travel, the best work has been done by journalists. Henry M. Stanley solved the question of the Dark Continent; and ill-fated O'Donovan enlightened us about Merv. We make the history of the future; that of Our Own Time was written by a journalist. There is hardly a part of the civilised or uncivilised globe which has not been described, and its secrets laid bare, by some member of that noble army of Special Correspondents who, taking their lives in their hands, amidst battle, murder, and sudden death, provide not only news, but solid information, for the breakfast-tables of the world. I have had the good fortune to be the only journalist who has visited New Caledonia, the Isle of Pines, and the New Hebrides. If I narrate *in extenso* my experiences during the native insurrection in the French colony, it is that the incidents set forth show thoroughly the manner in which the authorities of France in the South Seas have treated the natives with whom they have been brought into contact; and it shows how the natives of the New Hebrides will be treated if those islands should be annexed by France. I appeal to the Aborigines'

Protection Society to look after the interests of my friends in the New Hebrides, who, cannibals though they may be, have still an intelligent appreciation of their own rights and wrongs, and who have good grounds to hate the "*man-a-wee-wee*," and to desire, as expressed in the petition to Her Majesty given in the Appendix, that these Islands shall be annexed to Great Britain. My adventures whilst "recruiting," and on a voyage in a labour-vessel, I hope will be interesting.

The substance of the following pages has appeared in various publications in Australia, chiefly in the *Melbourne Argus* and *Australasian*, journals with which I have had the pleasure and the honour to be connected for some twelve years. Any special value "Cannibals and Convicts" may possess will arise from the fact that the descriptions were written at the places of which they treat.

Some may think that the first person singular occurs slightly too often. It is a bad habit into which a Special Correspondent too readily falls; but although the pages in "Cannibals and Convicts" have been thoroughly revised, their information brought down to date, and many new chapters written, it would have altered the individuality of the work if the anecdotal manner had been transposed into a more serious form. Besides, in writing of events in which one has taken part, one cannot avoid the frequent use of the word "I."

This volume is written not simply to amuse, but to instruct. The Author trusts that all Englishmen who desire the unity of the Empire will perceive the moral of these pages. It is as an Australian colonist, proud to belong to what he believes is the happiest portion of Greater Britain, that he sends this book forth to the world. It is as an Australian journalist and *littérateur*, writing from an Australian point of view, that he claims a hearing on questions which he has studied, and of which he vainly thinks that he knows somewhat.

"Canibals and Convicts" is dedicated to the memory of the late Sir Arthur Kennedy, who, when Governor of Queensland,

first raised the British flag over eastern New Guinea. I had intended some time back producing a book of this description in the Colonies; and one of the last letters written by the noble-minded pro-consul of Great Britain in Queensland was a kind acknowledgment of my desire to have his name associated with my work. Sir Arthur Kennedy, during his term of office, honoured me with his friendship. I know his feelings on this question. Had he lived to arrive in England, I think the arguments he would have brought before the Colonial Office might have resulted in Great Britain retaining possession of the territory which had been annexed, the German flag might have been kept away from our shores, and the future destiny of Australia, and her power to aid the mother-land, have been thereby assured. "So mote it be!"

JULIAN THOMAS.

ST. GEORGE'S CLUB,
HANOVER SQUARE,
*October*, 1886.

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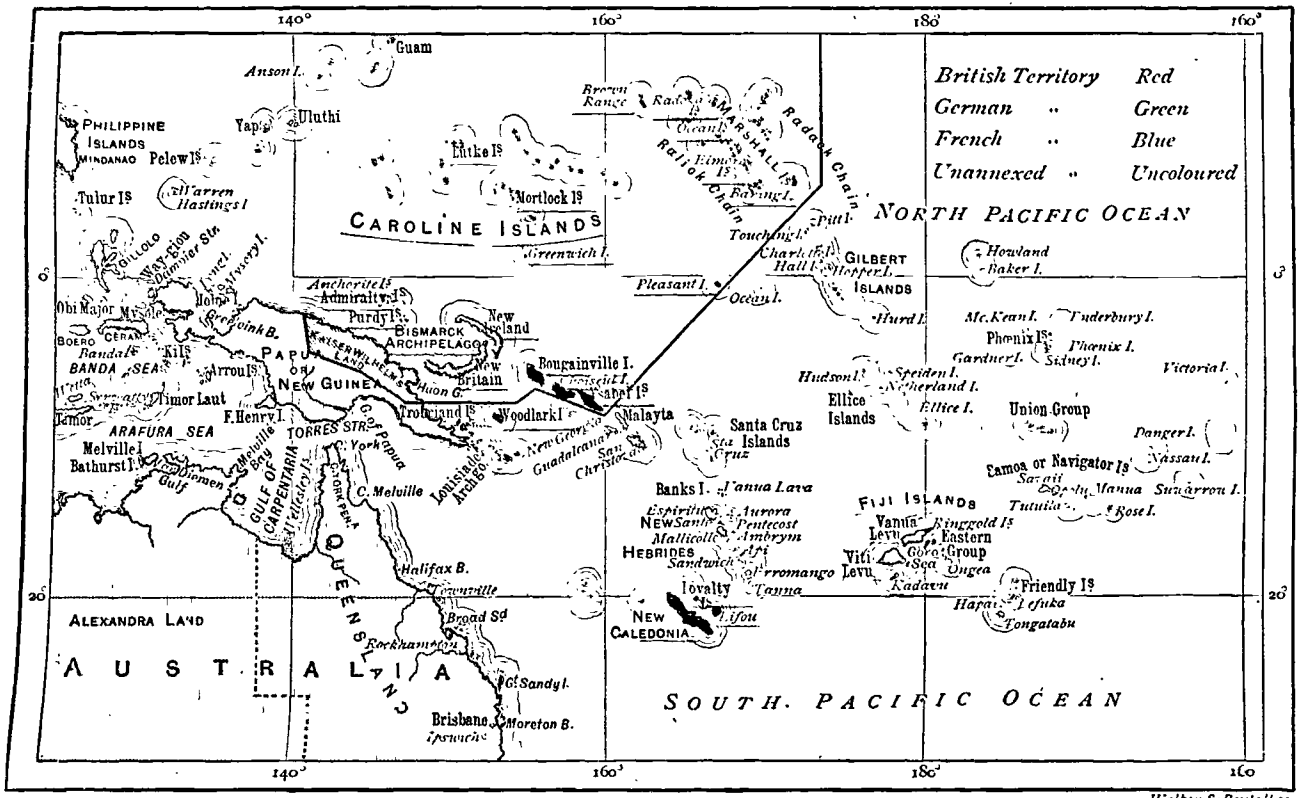


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# CANNIBALS AND CONVICTS.

## CHAPTER I.

### CANNIBALISM.

CANNIBALISM has ever been a tradition of fable and story-book. Various mythological personages were reputed to have had a weakness for human flesh. The story of Sawney Bean has frightened many children, who have also been scared by the record of that giant who had a fine nose for the blood of an Englishman. The waste places of the earth, in past times, were supposed to be filled, not only with dragons and lions, but with cannibal men. Othello told Desdemona

> "Of antres vast, and deserts idle,
> Rough quarries, rocks and hills, whose heads touch heaven;
> And of the cannibals that each other eat,
> The anthropophagi."

He appears to have made full use of the traveller's license to draw the bow.

But cannibalism is a fact even of the present day. The records of shipwrecks and of Arctic travel unfortunately show that, forced by hunger, even civilised man will feed on man. It is not, however, of these that I write—not of dismal wastes of snow and ice, but of verdant isles. It is a strange fact that the most lovely parts of the earth are the abodes of the anthropophagi. "Robinson Crusoe," in this respect, is no fiction: the fair islands of the Pacific have been, and are, inhabited by hundreds of thousands of cannibals. Civilisation has now reclaimed many places at one time the haunts of man-eaters, but there is no doubt that cannibalism was once practised throughout all the beautiful isles of Eastern and Western Polynesia.

Captain Cook was killed and eaten at Hawaii. When, a

century ago, the white sails of Cook's vessels first came over the waves to what are now known as the Sandwich Islands, the natives thought the ships were messengers of the gods. They worshipped a great deity *Lono*, or *Rono*. The wise men had prophesied that this god would make his avatar from across the sea; and when the Englishmen landed, and the natives saw that amongst them there was one having supreme authority, and at whose command thunder and lightning, as they thought, were produced, they said to themselves, "This is surely our great god *Lono*." So they made a wooden throne for Captain Cook, covered him with wonderful robes made of feathers, and offered sacrifices to him. The mariner accepted these as his due. My friend, Signor d'Albertis, benefited by the same idea in New Guinea. He did not pretend to be a god, but in the eyes of the natives he possessed powers approaching the supernatural. He used dynamite, and his camp on Yule Island was defended by mines in every direction. He wore a light coat-of-mail under his cotton jacket, and dared the natives to throw spears at his breast. D'Albertis lived alone and unharmed, but Cook was not so lucky. The natives began to think they had made a mistake. They said, "We will prove him. If he is a god we cannot hurt him. If he is not, he is an impostor, and deserves to die." So they clubbed Captain Cook to death. He was cut up, and, as tradition runs in Hawaii, a pig ran away with and devoured the heart of the greatest mariner Britain ever knew, who discovered Australasia for the English race.

Cook was killed one hundred years ago, and the Hawaii of to-day is civilised. The king, Kalakaua, is an acquaintance of mine. His ancestor was one of those who slew and ate Captain Cook; but there is no trace of the savage in his majesty. He can lay no claim to being king of the Cannibal Islands. He was educated in the United States of America, and was once, before he came to the throne, editor of a newspaper in Honolulu, and is thoroughly cultivated in his taste for wines of select brands. The Sandwich Islands are directly under American control. Being situated about two thousand miles from San Francisco, the citizens of the United States hold that in the possession of a foreign power Hawaii would be a danger to their settlements on the Pacific coast, and any European nation attempting to annex these islands would be warned off, as France was from Mexico.

South of the Sandwich Islands, on the other side of the Equator, lie the Society Islands, or Tahiti. French influence is paramount in this group. Both at Tahiti and Hawaii life is very pleasant; no taint of cannibalism there now. In that charming book, "South Sea Idyls," Professor Charles Warren Stoddard gives the best description of the islands of the Eastern Pacific which I know of.

If American and French influences predominate in the east, in the Central Pacific, at Samoa and Tonga, German influence is now almost supreme. Tonga is ruled by the oldest living monarch, King George. It possesses a Constitution and a Parliament. Its present prime minister is Mr. Shirley Baker, late Wesleyan missionary; but there is a power behind the throne. Mr. Carl Sahl, German consul at Sydney, is Receiver-General for Tonga. All the revenue is paid to his credit; and I presume he pays all the salaries, from the king's downwards. In Samoa German influence became established through Messrs. Godeffroy, known as the South Sea kings. These enterprising merchants made Samoa the headquarters for their Pacific trade, and thence they despatched their vessels for *copra*, for *bêche de mer*, and for sandalwood, to the Fijis, the New Hebrides, the Solomons, New Ireland, New Britain, and many lone islands hardly known to the ordinary mariner in the South Seas.

In 1880 Messrs. Godeffroy failed, and the German flag would have vanished from the Western Pacific, but the head of the firm had, as the friend of his youth, one Otto Von Bismarck, since known as Prince Bismarck, Chancellor of the German Empire. Those who should know, say that Prince Bismarck personally aided the Godeffroys, and that by his encouragement the new Company was formed which took up the business of the firm, and, exploiting new ground, was, in fact, the cause of the German flag being hoisted over north-eastern New Guinea and the adjacent islands. Be that as it may, as "trade follows the flag," from Samoa in a north-west course to New Guinea Germany is now assuming control of the commerce of the Western Pacific. On the other hand, the English flag is disappearing from the South Seas.

Recently a German warship visited Samoa, and the German standard was hoisted over one of the settlements. The American and English representatives have always joined together in their protests against the actions, often high-handed, of Messrs.

Godeffroy. The present American consul appears to enjoy the confidence of the "Malietoa"—a word, signifying high chief, often mistaken for a proper name, the holder being erroneously styled, "Malietoa, King of Samoa." Not long ago the Malietoa placed the islands under the protection of the United States; but the policy of the American Government, not to interfere with any foreign troubles, will, it is probable, prevent any active operations necessary to carry protection into effect. In 1874 Colonel A. B. Steinberger visited Samoa as an accredited agent of the United States Government. He wrote a report on the islands, and afterwards returned and framed a constitution and organised a government, of which the Malietoa was to be king and Steinberger hereditary prime minister. But as Steinberger was acting in the interests of the Godeffroys, the American and English consuls opposed his proceedings; and in 1876 he was forcibly removed from power and deported by the Commander of H.M.S. *Barracouta*, at the request of the representatives of England and America. New Zealand at the present time is endeavouring to open out a trade with Samoa. A wealthy corporation, the Union Steamship Company, of New Zealand, has a line running to Fiji, making occasional trips to Tonga and Samoa; and the trade, if it could be grasped by English hands, would be profitable. But I am afraid that German commercial influence, backed up by Prince Bismarck, is too powerful.

Several books have been written treating of Samoa and Tonga. By far the best in every respect is "Coral Lands," by Mr. H. Stonehewer Cooper, which deals thoroughly with the question of English interests there. I do not propose to go over the same ground; but having pointed out that if the French rule in the eastern Pacific, German influence is predominating in the west, I will at once take my readers to the chief British possession in the South Seas—Fiji, a few years back the home of the real "King of the Cannibal Islands."

## CHAPTER II.

### FIJI.

THE colony of Fiji comprises the islands which lie between the parallels of latitude 15° and 22° south of the Equator, and between the meridians of longitude 177° west and 175° east of the meridian of Greenwich. This area may be described as contained in a square, the sides of which are 440 geographical miles in length. It is distant from Sydney about 1,900 miles, and from Auckland 1,200 miles. It lies north-east of Tonga 300, and south-west of Samoa 500 miles. The French colony of New Caledonia lies to the westward about 500 miles. The number of islands has been variously stated at from 200 to 250; but this must include mere uninhabited rocks and islets. The geographical division of the colony into so many islands, and the small scale of the maps upon which they are usually represented, have led to the impression that the colony is small in area and importance. But it will probably surprise many to be told that Viti Levu, one only of the eighty inhabited islands, is about as large as Jamaica, and considerably larger than Cyprus; that a second, Vanua Levu, would contain Mauritius three times over, and Barbados ten times; and that the aggregate area of the whole is greater than that of *all* the British West India Islands, including Trinidad. The total area of the principal inhabited islands is 7,421 square miles, or 4,751,360 acres, being slightly larger than the area of Wales. The more important islands are hilly and mountainous, rising in grand and picturesque outlines more or less abruptly from the shore to heights of 4,000 and 4,500 feet. Upon the south-eastern, or windward sides, the islands are covered with dense forests, containing numerous varieties of large and valuable trees. The lower lands are all lightly timbered, and apparently have all been under cultivation at a not distant period when the native population was much larger. The soil is almost everywhere deep and easily worked. The northern and north-western sides of the larger island, that

is to say the leeward sides, are characterised by a comparative absence of forest lands. The hills or plains are covered with long reeds or grass, and dotted with clumps of Casuarina and Pandanus.

Fiji is essentially a well-watered country. Frequent rains keep alive the sources of the thousands of small affluents feeding the main rivers. Of these rivers, both for size and facility of navigation, the Rewa in Viti Levu stands first. It is navigable for boats, punts, or flat-bottomed steamers, for a distance of forty or fifty miles from its mouth. Several large streams, notably the Waimanu, the Waidina, and the Waimala, fall into it. The sources of these streams lie in the high mountains of the interior, three or four thousand feet above the level of the sea. Besides these, the Sigatoka, the Nadi, and Ba rivers, with many others, drain the principal watersheds of Viti Levu. In Vanua Levu the rivers are not so large, though they are nearly as numerous. The more important are the Dreketi, the Lambasa, the Wailevu, and the Wainunu. Almost every valley in the group has its brawling stream or brook, from which the native occupants irrigate their plantations. Fiji is as rich in harbours and roadsteads as it is in rivers. Each island is surrounded by a barrier reef, and with few exceptions is accessible through passages, usually found opposite to the most considerable valley or river. Between this river and the shore ships lie safely at anchor, protected by an indestructible natural breakwater.

The present capital of Fiji is at Suva, near the mouth of the Rewa river in Viti Levu. But the first settlement was at Levuka, on the small island of Ovalau, near the centre of the group, and this is still a populous and prosperous township. After Viti and Vanua Levu, the productive island of Taviuni contains the greatest number of European residents. But the total white population does not exceed 3,500. The total population of Fiji, including the imported Polynesian and Indian coolie labourers, is 128,000. But amongst the native Fijians the death-rate far exceeds that of the births.

Fiji contains all the elements of a great future prosperity. There are few places in the world so suitable for the successful exploitation of tropical agriculture. Sugar, tea, coffee, cotton, cinchona, are all produced here. Much English and Australian capital has been invested in these islands, and the country has

become civilised by the operations of commerce as well as by Christianity. As regards religion, the Wesleyan Church has by far the greater number of adherents, the mission having been established here since 1835. The Catholic mission followed in 1844, the Church of England in 1870, and the Presbyterian in 1883. With the blessings of government as a Crown colony, with schools, hospitals, mechanics' institutes, clubs, newspapers, a "Society" of educated and cultivated people, and three lines of steamers in communication with the outer world, Fiji is a nice place to live in. The stranger finds it hard indeed to realise, that within the memory of men not yet dotards a large number of the inhabitants of Fiji were bloodthirsty cannibals.

The convict as well as the cannibal has a record in these islands. The Rev. Thomas Williams, one of the earliest missionaries, describes the doings of the first white men in Fiji:—"About the year 1804 a number of convicts escaped from New South Wales and settled among the islands. Most of these desperadoes lived either at Bau or Rewa, the chiefs of which allowed them whatever they chose to demand, receiving in return their aid in carrying on war. The new settlers made themselves dreaded by the natives, who were awed by the murderous effects of their firearms. The hostile chiefs, seeing their bravest warriors fall in battle without an apparent cause, believed their enemies to be more than human, against whom no force of theirs availed, whose victory was always sure, while their progress invariably spread terror and death. No thought of improving and consolidating the power thus won seems to have been entertained by the whites. Had such a desire possessed them, the absolute government of the entire group lay within their reach; but their ambition never rose beyond a life of indulgence and an unrestrained gratification of the vilest passions. Some of them were men of the most desperate wickedness, being regarded as monsters even by the ferocious cannibals with whom they associated. These lawless men were twenty-seven in number on their arrival, but in a few years the greater part had ended their career, having fallen in the native wars, or in deadly combat among themselves. A Swede, named Savage, who had some redeeming traits in his character, and was acknowledged as head man by the whites, was drowned and eaten by the natives of Weilea in 1813. In 1824 only two, and in 1840 but one of

his companions survived. This last was an Irishman named Connor, who stood in the same relation to the King of Rewa as Savage had done to the King of Bau. His influence among the natives was so great, that all his desires, some of which were of the most inhuman kind, were gratified. The King of Rewa would always avenge, and often in the most cruel manner, the real or fancied wrongs of this man. If he desired the death of any native, the chief would send for the doomed man, and direct him to make and heat an oven, into which, when red-hot, the victim was cast, having been murdered by another man sent for the purpose. Soon after the death of his patron, Paddy Connor left Rewa. He was thoroughly Fijianised, and of such depraved character that the white residents who had settled in the islands drove him from among them, being afraid of so dangerous a neighbour. At the close of his life, his thoughts seemed only occupied about rearing pigs and fowls, and increasing the number of his children from forty-eight to fifty." In 1880 I saw loafing about the beach at Levuka an old white man who rejoiced in the name of "Cannibal Jack." There was a dispute as to whether he had been a convict, but there was no mistake as to his anthropophagy.

A few days afterwards I had my last interview with Thakambau, ex-cannibal king, and *Dei Gratia* Ruler of Fiji, as he was described in the Act by which, in 1874, he ceded Fiji to England. As chief of Bau, Thakambau was the most powerful native ruler that Fiji has produced. Bau, though only a very small island united to the shore of Viti Levu, near one of the mouths of the Rewa, by a reef fordable at low water, has been peopled by a warlike tribe from time immemorial, and seventy or eighty years ago it was the most important in the archipelago. Thakambau, called Seru in his youth, was born about the year 1817. Like his father, Tanoa, he was a ruthless cannibal, and early gave evidence of the ambitious and crafty disposition which distinguished his maturer years. He had barely attained his sixth year when his hands were first stained with the blood of his countrymen. At that age a lad taken prisoner in battle was brought before him, and he clubbed him to death. In 1832, the chiefs of Bau rebelling against their king, Tanoa had to quit his dominions. The young Seru, who was left behind, being considered harmless on account of his youth, while apparently

wholly engrossed with the pleasures suited to his years, skilfully intrigued against the usurper, and eventually accomplished the restoration of his father after an exile of five years. The success of this well-planned scheme gained for him the title of Thakambau (evil to Bau) from the rebel party, and he was ever afterwards known by that name. The defeated party were subjected to the inhuman punishments which were common in those days. A prisoner being brought before Thakambau, he ordered his tongue to be cut out, and ate it raw before the man's face, cracking jokes the while. The victim was subsequently, after being submitted to further tortures, killed and eaten. On a more recent occasion, when being dunned by a European for a debt which he was not in the humour to pay, this amiable monarch suggestively reminded the importunate creditor that the flesh of the white man was like ripe bananas.

It was the ancient custom to have two rulers of equal importance, the Roko Tui (sacred king), and the Vunivalu (root of war). The duties of the former pertained to the priesthood, and were connected with heathen sacrifices, while the latter occupied the position of prime minister and commander-in-chief. The rank Tanoa and Thakambau held was that of Vunivalu. The introduction of Christianity destroyed the importance of the Roko Tui, but the title was still retained. When Tanoa died, in 1853, five of his wives were strangled. In July of the following year Thakambau was formally invested with the rank and dignity of Vunivalu of Bau. The event was celebrated by the sacrifice of eighteen Fijians, who were ready cooked for eating, when, through the exertions of a missionary and Mr. Owen, an Adelaide merchant, trading in Fiji, the bodies were given up to the latter for burial, on his threatening to cease all business transactions if the cannibal feast took place. It is a pity he could not save the lives of the victims.

Cannibalism was practised in Bau, as all over Fiji, until 1854. The Wesleyan missionaries had long been endeavouring to gain over Thakambau to their cause, and on the 30th of April in that year, after much vacillation, he took the decisive step, when cannibalism at once ceased under his rule. At nine o'clock on the morning of that day, the *lali*, the fearful drum which had sounded the announcement of a cannibal feast only ten days previously, was beaten for an assemblage to witness the

Vunivalu's public renunciation of heathenism. He did not abandon polygamy, however, until three years later. In January, 1857, his many wives were dismissed, and he was married to the favourite according to the Wesleyan formula. It is the custom of the missionaries to withhold the rite of baptism from natives living in polygamy; and this obstacle being removed, Thakambau and his wife were publicly baptised on the 11th January.

The remarkable scene which followed on this occasion is thus described by the Rev. Mr. Waterhouse:—"In the afternoon the king was publicly baptised. In the presence of God he promised 'to renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh.' He engaged to believe all the articles of the Christian faith, and solemnly vowed in the name of the Holy Trinity 'to keep God's holy will and commandments, and to walk in the same all the days of his life.' In accordance with my request previously made, the king then addressed the assembly. It must have cost him many a struggle to stand up before his court, his ambassadors, and the flower of his people, to confess his former sins. And in time past he had considered himself a god, and had received honours almost divine from his people. Now he humbles himself, and adores his great Creator and merciful Preserver. And what a congregation he had. Husbands whose wives he had dishonoured! widows whose husbands he had slain! sisters whose brothers had been strangled by his orders! relatives whose friends he had eaten! and children the descendants of those he had murdered, and who had vowed to revenge the wrongs inflicted on their fathers! A thousand stony hearts heaved with fear and astonishment as Thakambau gave utterance to the following sentiments:—'I have been a bad man. I disturbed the country. The missionaries came and invited me to embrace Christianity; but I said to them, "I will continue to fight." God has singularly preserved my life. At one time I thought that I had myself been the instrument of my own preservation; but now I know that it was the Lord's doing. I desire to acknowledge Him as the only and the true God. I have scourged the world.' He was deeply affected, and spoke with great diffidence." Truly the most wonderful conversion of the age, this of the ex-cannibal king!

Was or was not Thakambau a real Christian? is a question I

have often heard argued. Some say that he only embraced Christianity "from political motives, when he found that European support was essential to his supremacy; and amongst royal 'Defenders of the Faith,' he may be compared rather to Constantine than any other." The Wesleyan missionaries in Fiji say that Thakambau was in his later years a really devout Christian at heart, as it is understood by the Churches. It is probable that Thakambau was a far-seeing savage. From his earliest youth he protected the missionaries; he saw that the white men represented to an extent the great unknown power of the white race. As a boy he had seen evidences of that power, when an American man-of-war gave Tanoa and his people a "whipping" for an attack on the crew of a Massachusetts whaler. The missionaries in return said that Thakambau, in spite of his taste for human flesh, was not after all a bad fellow; some day he would repent and become a Christian. Some scoffers allege that Thakambau only gave up anthropophagy when his digestion was gone and he had lost his teeth. On several occasions he nearly furnished food for others. Thakambau selected Ebenezer as his baptismal name, and his wife that of Lydia. From thenceforth he scrupulously adhered to his profession of religion, as far as all outward observances are concerned.

Thakambau was a remarkable-looking man, and in bearing was always every inch a chief. His height was fully six feet, and he had a commanding figure, which even in old age bore traces of the great personal strength which had distinguished him in his youth. He was not by any means ill-looking, although the ordinary expression of his face was that of a clever and extremely crafty Fijian. In May, 1867, Thakambau was proclaimed king of all Fiji by the white residents, and his majesty granted a constitution, but it remained practically a dead letter. Two years later, being pressed by the American Government for a claim of £9,000, the king accepted an offer from the Polynesia Company, formed in Melbourne, to pay the debt in return for certain grants of land. The money was paid, but the Company never succeeded in securing possession of the land; and when the islands were annexed to Great Britain the Imperial Government ignored the Company's existence, recognising only the claims of the few shareholders who were in possession of the land they had selected. In the year 1871 a government was formed by the

leading white residents, but it met with great opposition from many of the settlers, and it had a very chequered existence, until an end was put to its career by the annexation of the islands to Great Britain in September, 1874. In surrendering his country, Thakambau was chiefly influenced by the difficulties of his Government, and the fear of Maafu, a powerful Tongan chief, settled in the windward part of the group, who aimed at the conquest of the country.

After an unconditional cession of the islands had been made to Sir Hercules Robinson, the Governor of New South Wales, as the Queen's representative, ex-King Thakambau, who was allowed a liberal pension, accepted an invitation from Sir Hercules to visit him in Sydney with two of his sons. Thakambau spent three weeks in Sydney, and was greatly delighted with all he saw. The visit, however, was the cause of a terrible disaster to his countrymen. When the old chief returned to his native land he was ill with the measles. The disease spread rapidly, and during the six months it ravaged the country 40,000 Fijians died of it. The natives naturally regarded this fearful visitation as an indication that the gods were displeased at the surrender of their country to foreigners.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE KING OF THE CANNIBAL ISLANDS.

I AM not writing a history of Fiji. Many books have been published on this colony; the best as regards the old days being "Fiji in 1870," by my *confrère*, Mr. Henry Britton of Melbourne, to whose work I acknowledge my indebtedness. Fiji had a court at the Colonial Exhibition, and a distinguished commissioner in the person of the Hon. James E. Mason of Taviuni. I will merely record my trip to the home of the ex-cannibal king.

I left Sydney on a special mission in the steamer *Gunga*, and we arrived off Levuka at nightfall. A scene as from fairyland was before us. A dark background of hill and mountain silhouetted against the sky; the young moon, raising its crescent in the star-spangled heavens, seemed hanging over a hollow in the hill top; deep shadows were on the waters. On the shore, a long row of lights on a level with the sea, others higher, and still higher glimmered those on the mountain slope. "Hard-a-starboard!" The *Gunga* turned; and the two signal-lights being brought into a line, we steamed, stern on, to the town. All hands were on deck, and alert; for the entrance through the reefs is a narrow one. Skilfully piloted by the captain, we passed safely through this, and the anchor was dropped at 7.45 p.m., seven days and three hours from Sydney. Then a gun was fired by the chief officer. The echoes reverberated round and round the hills. We waked the people up and let them know we were there, and no mistake! All portmanteaus and boxes were packed; we were eager to be ashore, and anxiously awaited the arrival of the doctor, one of our number who had not had the measles being rather dubious as to whether he would be quarantined or not. Then a boat came alongside; the gangway was lowered, and the captain descended this with the bill of health. But the boat sheered off, and the following conversation took place:—

"I'm not coming on board. Have you any sickness?"

"No," said the captain.

"Was there any measles or fever in Sydney?"

"No."

"Have you any children on board?"

"No. Here is a clean bill of health."

"Oh! I don't care about that. Put up a green light, and stop there till morning; and then put a Sydney paper in a bottle washed out with vinegar, and let me have it when I come."

Then the doctor rowed away. There was a hurried consultation on the poop, and three groans were given, such as are seldom heard in Fiji. But after the bath before daylight, and as the sun gilded the eastern horizon, those of us who took their first view of Levuka forgave the hard-hearted doctor. There are few more beautiful places on God's earth. White bungalows are scattered up and down the mountain side; the main street runs along the beach; above the low houses are towering cocoanut trees; native huts are to be seen in the distance. It is like both Townsville and Hong Kong. But at daybreak the most wonderful thing is the various shading of green visible on the hills; every imaginable tint is to be seen there.

Levuka is healthy; it has a good harbour, that is, the reef forms an immense natural basin, having two deep and safe entrances. It is in the centre of the archipelago, and above all there is a magnificent water supply. From the heights of Ovalau numerous streams come pouring down with a perpetual force, which enables every resident to have a shower-bath if he will invest in a few yards of piping and a hose nozzle. There are also romantic bathing places in the ravines—deep basins shaded by the cliffs and forest foliage, where one can enjoy the pleasures of swimming and diving. Levuka is still in almost every respect superior to Suva, the new capital, which seven years back was but a mangrove swamp.

I made many very good friends in Fiji—to Mr. Fillingham Parr, the Hon. William Hennings, Mr. Thomas Parker, and the Rev. Lorimer Fison, I was especially indebted. Mr. Fison, the Wesleyan missionary and head of the Native Normal College at Navalua, was perhaps the best Fijian scholar in the group. He kindly gave me the use of his boat, and boat's crew of nine stalwart Fijian scholars training for church and school at Navalua.

I sailed with them up the Rewa river, past the sugar-cane plantations and sugar mills, far into the Namosi country, "a proclaimed district," where the hill tribes were reputed to be still cannibals. I taught my "boys" English, they taught me Fijian. I had a good time of it and some adventuree sailing through the coral reefs. Lying luxuriously, like a pasha of many tails, under the awning, with one leg thrown over the gunwale, I enjoyed that *dolce far niente* which was thoroughly compatible with the climate, time, and my own disposition. On one occasion my leg was roughly thrust inwards by the tall and gentle Watsoni, my captain, who, squatted in the stern sheets behind me, was steering. Surprised at this, I jumped up, when he deprecatingly pointed to the water. Fathoms below, one saw all the beauties of a marine garden, fish of all colours swam round; but on the top, close to where I sat, were some "pilot fish," and under the boat the dark green body of an immense shark was visible. In this eligible position he kept up with us for some time, but my own reminiscences, as well as Watsoni's advice, caused me for a time to assume a less free-and-easy attitude.

These nominally Christian natives had their superstitions. They still, in Fiji, whistle for the wind, and call and coax it: "*Bulliamai! Cosimai!* Come on board, O Wind! The white chief here will give you some of his *kava*. We will give you some cocoanuts. Come on board, O Wind, as far as our village, and we will give you pig and fish!" As a last bribe, they would whistle again, and say: "O Wind! come with us to the next village, and we will ask the chief to give you a beautiful wife." Even as Italian sailors attempt to bribe the Virgin and saints by offers of candles at different altars when they get safe ashore, so would my Fijian boys strive to bribe the wind god. When I asked them how he took his pay, they said, if he came with us, he could take cocoanuts and grog. We could not see him, so he could take what he liked; and at the next village there were beautiful women, whom the wind could kiss and nobody see him. But when the breeze did come, I took my afternoon preventive, and then poured out a libation to Pluto. How the boys laughed as the wind blew the liquor far away. I dare say the *Taraga Vagaboda* is remembered in that island as a worshipper of the wind.

The Fijian planters, who received me so hospitably in my

wanderings about the islands, are as fine a body of gentlemen as I wish to meet. They have often been much slandered, and have even been classed as "beach-combers." The natural history of the "beach-comber" is a strange one. He has never been thoroughly investigated. In the early days he was a runaway sailor or convict from New South Wales. He had then a good time of it in the Pacific until he was killed and eaten. But the records of this most interesting subject are as faint as those of Pliocene or Pleistocene man. The missionaries have dismissed him contemptuously, and we have no autobiographies. We know that occasionally he rose to power and wealth with the natives amongst whom he lived. Individual strength of character of course asserted itself in the "beach-comber," as in civilised walks of life. Thus of the two men I knew in Fiji, "Cannibal Jack" and "Harry the Jew," the one was a drunken loafer and outcast, the other a man of property, blessed with a score of children and grandchildren to soothe his declining years. Harry was a most interesting study. I paid him a visit at his residence on the Navua River, in company with Mr. Joske, of Suva, and the gentlemanly police inspector who was sent to chaperon me in my progress through Viti Levu, and who deserved my best thanks for the courteous manner in which he performed his duties. Harry lived in a good native house, waited on by his fourteenth Fijian wife and a half-caste daughter, reputed to be the finest model of a maiden in Fiji. She was clad only in a *sulu*, a scanty calico skirt, like the bevy of her native companions who laughed and giggled at our approach. This girl did not know a word of English, and was as thorough a savage and heathen as if she had not a drop of white blood in her veins. Harry was a little old man, clad in clean white pants and shirt, very shaky on his legs through age and much *kava*-drinking, but intellectually still smart and intelligent. If not a Christian, he was certainly not a Hebrew, either by race or in religion. He obtained his *sobriquet* through some smart dealings with a fellow-deserter from a man-of-war. Amongst the knot of "beach-combers" in Fiji, who, like early diggers in California and Australia, were styled by, or assumed, any name but their own, the "Jew" stuck to Harry, although he was a born cockney. He was rather tabooed by the others, as being too clever. In those early days of the missionaries, a chief in the Navua district had "lotued;" that is, given

in his adhesion to the white man's faith, and then gone back to his old superstitions, and was at war with a nominally Christian tribe. He knew enough of our religion to be aware that the Great Sacrifice was to be laid at the door of the Jews; and he thought that between Hebrew and Christian enmity would still exist, so he sent word to Harry, "Come and join me. You are a Jew. We both hate the Christians, and we will wipe them out." The beach was getting uncomfortably hot for Harry then, so he accepted the offer, and with his double-barrelled gun went into the hills and became a great chief—a Warwick, who changed the destinies of petty kingdoms by the aid of his fowling-piece. Wives and *kava* were his. He lived a life of bloodshed, drunkenness, and debauchery. "They often made plots to kill me," said Harry, "but the women always warned me. Once by accident I saved my life. I fired at a fowl at the corner of a house. It just flew round and died on the other side. They heard the gun, and knew who I was, and then they saw the fowl dead on their side, and they thought I could shoot round the corner, and I became a bigger man than ever." I shall always remember this old sinner, who revelled in narrating his past misdeeds; nor shall I forget his bronze Juno of a daughter, whom my companions so much admired. I did not. I can only find beauties in those of my own race and colour.

I sailed from Levuka to Bau with that kindest of *cicerones*, Mr. William Hennings, the great "white chief" of Fiji. With us was a dear little friend of mine who had royal blood in his veins. Arrived at the island home of the *Vunivalu*, we had to go ashore from our cutter in a canoe. All the first families were there to welcome us. Ratu Joe, the Benjamin of Thakambau's old age, a striking example of the success of the pious training of the Wesleyans at Newington College, Sydney, called out to me, "How are you, Doctor? Will you come and camp with me to-night? Only bachelor's quarters, you know, but I'll put you up as well as I can." Prince Joe was only wearing a *sulu*, a loin cloth of calico, and a shirt, and it seemed very strange to hear these English colloquialisms in what a few years back was a cannibal island. As we landed, the little princesses and chieftainesses, all lightly clad in *sulus* and calico jackets of many colours, known as *pinàfos*, raised a cheer. I raised my hat, and replaced it on my head, preparing to jump ashore. Some of my readers may

have balanced themselves on a Fijian *wonga*, others will have seen pictures of it. You have to part your hair down the middle, and equally divide the silver in your trousers' pockets, as you stand on the plank which is all the passenger accommodation. I had done this all right, but I neglected proper precautions in landing. Raising one foot to jump ashore, the equilibrium was destroyed, the thing "bucked," and down I went into four feet of water, my helmet driven over my head, nearly suffocating me. How the "first families" laughed at my triumphal entry. It was as good as a circus to them.

We found the sometime-cannibal King of Fiji crouching by the fire in the smallest of the native houses in the royal compound. He wore only a *sulu*, with a blanket round his shoulders. A worn, old, grizzled, mean-looking nigger, he seemed nothing more. But he was reading, or looking at, a Fijian Bible, and apparently deriving great consolation therefrom. No doubt he felt that he needed forgiveness. Mr. Fison told me that he believed Thakambau had really and truly repented, and was, in every sense of the word, a thorough Christian. In this state old "Thak." was not so interesting to a student of humanity as he would have been in his early days, when, in a moment of savage humour, he had cut out the tongue of a captive enemy, saying, "So, this is the tongue which spoke evil of Thakambau—lying tongue! it shall do so no more." And he ate it before the late proprietor's eyes. I thought of this episode as we passed between the two large ivi trees on which, in the old days, pieces of male and female flesh were hung during the savage feasts; and I envied the early missionaries the opportunity they then had for study of character. Since Fiji received civilisation things are rather tame. There was nothing particularly startling in the manner in which my partner in our evening game of euchre, the Crown Prince Abel, turned up the right bower; I could do the same myself. Still, that night, with the sense of all the old cannibal associations round me, I slept uneasily. Against no other savage have half the enormities been alleged which the Fijian is known to have committed. Yet Fiji is now all nominally Christian. Still, when at Bau I awoke at early morn, and found the Crown Prince polishing off the last bottle of whisky, I was startled to see some natives bring in two or three long bodies wrapped in white calico. In the dim light

these looked like human corpses. I had been dreaming of Tanoa and the cannibal ovens. Was the *lotu* (Christianity) in Bau only superficial, and did the Crown Prince secretly indulge in the horrid orgies of his ancestors? This *was* interesting! So I rose from my mat and approached the fire. But I was dis——, I mean very much relieved, to find that the objects which had startled me were only some fine specimens of pig turned into pork. With reference to the aforesaid game of euchre, the Crown Prince and myself were opposed by Messrs. James Mason and William Hennings, the one an Oxford graduate, the other of German nationality, originally in the employ of the Godeffroys. We sat cross-legged on mats under the grass roof of Abel's house, with an admiring crowd of courtiers around. As strange a game of cards this as was ever played!

Thakambau and his sons had always great respect paid to them by the common people. The claims of rank and the etiquette to be observed towards chiefs, were in Fiji as strong as in Spain. But the power of the chiefs in all the islands of the South Seas, under missionary influence, has been gradually broken by the education and employment of faithful followers as native ministers and teachers. He who preaches the heavenly kingdom, of which the Gospel is so new to his hearers, becomes a greater man than the earthly chief whom these dusky apostles have power to denounce, and for whom they occasionally prophesy uncomfortable things in the future. My objection to the system of employing a large number of native ministers is, that it tends to level down religion, instead of raising the convert. It is just the same objection that I have urged against some of the sensational religious organisations in Australia. The ideas of faith and works, too, get considerably mixed between the native minister and his flock. The law, also, sits lightly on many of these warm-blooded, sensuous children of Polynesia. The flesh with them is still weak. Their natures, inherited from generations of ancestors, with whom to love was enough, cannot be changed in a day; so, much ground for scandal is often given by male and female teachers. The missionaries may sometimes get an inkling of this, but as a rule I suppose they are in ignorance of it. But the missionaries, in the excessive use of native catechists and ministers, are setting up a superior power which has not much ground for respect, a

power very likely to be often abused, and sometimes culminating in the most absurd theories and "new departures" on behalf of native pastors and their flocks. The position of a native minister is one to be coveted by his fellows. It gives in many things as much power as that possessed by chiefs. The native pastor is always well fed, and has always the prettiest wife. In Fiji he considers himself superior to any white man except the missionaries.

I was very much amused at an incident which happened on the Rewa River as I was sailing up one afternoon. In a small canoe, sitting on his portmanteau, with his knees crouched up to his chin, evidently very tired and uncomfortable, was Dr. Corney, Government medical officer for Suva and district. He was being paddled down with the stream, and I did not envy him. Shortly after, tacking out from a native village on the bank, we overtook a large double canoe with mat sails. I put the tiller hard up to overhaul her, but Watsoni, the boss of my crew of nine men, protested. "Missonaree Kai Viti," said he. I intimated that I was going to see this missionary. "Missonaree," said Dafida, making signs that the good man was asleep, and should not be disturbed. A short time before this it had been officially announced at Nasova that Fiji was "not a white man's country." This certainly bore out the statement. The theory of the white conquest going on all over the world was played out here. The pale-faced doctor, Government official, was being paddled down by one boy in a wretched craft. The brown native was sailing up in magnificent style, sleeping on a couch, two pretty "Sisters" fanning him.

But if the whites had not conquered here, their religion, as it is in the followers of John Wesley, was supreme. This man was respected and pampered, because of his position in the Church. The softest mat, the fattest pork, the biggest yam were his; and the youngest and prettiest female communicants waited on him to do him honour. The whole thing annoyed me. I gave such a yell as scared the meek Dafida. Josepha, six feet two inches high, would have sunk into his boots, if he had any. All my boys trembled. I ran into the holy man's canoe, roused him from his slumbers, and fluttered the attendant virgins. Mr. Fison's boat and crew protected me from the consequences of this rash act: the good

man did not curse me; but he was very sulky, and would not give me any information. The sisters and the brethren all hung on the few words which fell from his lips. He was evidently a big preacher, powerful in expounding the Word. I left him at last, shaking hands with the sisters, and smacking him on the back, with the advice given by a bullock-driver to a late Governor of Victoria—"You've got a very good billet, old chap; you stick to it." When native ministers and teachers can have a good time like this Fijian, little wonder that fond parents devote their children to the service of the mission. As the Irish farmer is proud of having his son brought up at Maynooth, as the Scotch shepherd pinches and strives to get his firstborn into the Kirk, as the English provincial shopkeeper delights in having a "minister" in the family; so the converted Kanaka devotes his children, male and female, to a cause which pays them and sheds honour on their relations. In the training institutions of the missionary societies in Polynesia there is such a run on the Church that the supply of teachers exceeds the demand.

Like the African-American negroes, the Kanakas delight in worship. Somebody has remarked, that this is because they are nearer Nature. So they are "sensitive to signs and dreams, to the voice of birds, to the cries of children, to the heat of noon, to the calm of night. They have a fine ear for music, a quick relish for the dance, a love for colour." That is the poetical way of describing the black man's sensitive nature; meaning that he is not level-headed, as we are, and that he "splurges" over in his religious forms. What does a Kanaka convert know, as a rule, of the spirit underlying the forms of Christian faith? To him it is only a new and mysterious *tabu*, which he receives as the great thing which makes the white man powerful. This is the sermon preached by a native Fijian teacher in New Britain:—"See what the *lotu* (Christianity) has done for us; we have a big ship to come and visit us, and bring us cloth and beads. Mr. Brown has a big house, and is a powerful chief; all this has been given us; then how good a thing *lotu* is." The natives love worship, and they love preaching. A negro revival in the United States, or the scenes at a public baptism, will soon be rivalled amongst the emotional Kanakas. How well I remember standing on a bluff looking over the Appomattox, the river

winding a silver streak through the valley, the slopes green with tobacco plants, the distant woods tinged with lovely shades of blue and red. Below us hundreds of negroes, the men all in black, the women with many a streak of colour in the bright kerchiefs around their necks and twisted on their heads. A stone's throw on the bluff above them, unknown Confederate and Federal dead were buried together. Here we had fought one of our last fights with Grant. So short a time, and yet in events so long! Randolph, of Roanoke, on whose land we stood, loved not slavery; he released his bondsmen at his death; but I think, if possible, his bones would have turned in his grave if he had heard the excited preachers on the bank urging the negroes against sin, and to lead a new life—namely, to avoid whisky-drinking and to vote the Republican ticket. Whilst our political masters applauded on one bank, girl after girl walked into the stream up to her armpits, and was dipped three times in the name of the Trinity, emerging in an ecstacy, shouting, midst a chorus of "glories," "I am saved." The native ministers from Fiji and Eastern Polynesia have taken Christianity in just the same way as the American negro. They are fond of long prayers, of talk, of passionate appeal to their hearers; and religious excitement and mania is common amongst them as with the blacks in the United States.

I remember hearing evening service at the Mission Training Institute at Navalua, in Fiji. The venerable native pastor who officiated was learned enough in his own language. He knew all the literature attainable, the staple of which was the Bible. Like Timothy, he had studied it from his youth upwards. I speculated very much as to what he thought of the strange contradictions in the books of Moses, which have puzzled learned and holy men through many ages. Samuel and Kings, however, would no doubt seem quite logical to him. In the matter of taking of wives, and smiting their enemies hip and thigh, the ancient Hebrew very much resembled the Fijian of a quarter of a century ago. The deeds of the great warriors of Israel would remind him of the prowess of the chiefs of Viti. The escapes of David would be paralleled in his mind by the marvellous adventures of Thakambau, who was also saved, after a hot and bloody youth and manhood, to die a holy man. He would remember the day when one of the chiefs of Bau was bribed by the Rewa King to

slay the island monarch. Then Mr. Calvert, the missionary, went to him and said, "It is all up with you; treachery is around you; you will be killed next week. Get on board the mission schooner, and we will take you to Tonga." But Thakambau smote his breast and cried, "I was born a chief, and I will die a chief. My father's son will not fly like a *kai-si*." Mr. Calvert then went to the traitor chief and said, "What will the Rewa king give you for your treachery?" "Two double canoes," was the reply. Then Mr. Calvert, in the poetic Fijian, "The leaves are on the boughs, and the roots are in the soil, and the timber is not yet cut. Take these two cases of American axes, and let Thakambau live." So the traitor relented, and the Bau chieftain lived to conquer and eat many of his enemies, and "get religion" late in life. And one of his old adherents in Navalua now read the Scriptures to me with a force of delivery and dramatic fervour which Irving could not surpass, and then he prayed with the passion of a Talmage, whilst the natives bent in Oriental fashion, with their heads to the ground. "What a people to get up a revival," I thought, and when I returned to Levuka I was told of a strange religious craze recently put down by Maafu in the Windward Isles.

## CHAPTER IV.

### MAAFU, PRINCE OF TONGA.

MAAFU, nephew of King George of Tonga, was the most remarkable native the Pacific Islands have known since the days of Kamahameha the Great, of Hawaii. Like Prince Hal, and other princes of later days, Maafu led a wild life in his youth. Good King George, in fact, banished him and a party of his boon companions. They sailed for the Windward Islands, the eastern portion of the Fijian group, known as Lau by the natives, and joined one of the chiefs in a tribal war. I do not know whether Maafu had read of Hengist and Horsa, but he followed their example, sent for more of his Tongan friends, and ruled Lau to the day of his death, at first directly, and afterwards under the Governor of Fiji, being styled "a direct representative of her Majesty." The Windward Islands are, perhaps, the most beautiful of the Fijian group, and at Lakemba and Loma Loma Maafu always dispensed hearty hospitality to white travellers. I have very many pleasant memories of Lau.

Maafu, *Roko Tui Lau*, Viceroy of the Windward Islands, and "direct representative of her Majesty," was not one to trouble himself much about religion. Like all the men of Tonga, he was supposed to be a Wesleyan Christian, but his Christianity was certainly of an original kind. The worst deed ever alleged against the early sandalwood traders was that a number of natives were suffocated in a cave at Vaté, in the New Hebrides, by the smoke from a fire built at its mouth. But this was done by order of Maafu, who, on behalf of an Australian syndicate of highly-respectable merchants and church members, was "bossing" an expedition in search of sandalwood through the New Hebrides. I do not think Maafu would be guilty of any needless atrocity. We may be sure the men of the island had deserved punishment, and Maafu was a man to only strike once. The rod of iron with which, after conquering, he—until Fiji was annexed—ruled Lau, was that of a tyrant, but a wise tyrant.

Maafu smote hard, as a warning to all offenders. In Loma Loma there is a cave where a number of native Fijians, his opponents, concealed themselves; he smoked them to death in the same manner as at Vaté. It was a favourite *coup* of his in warfare, and I believe it was original on his part, and not a plagiarism on the proceedings in Algeria of Marshal Pelissier, Duc de Malakoff. The French soldier more possibly borrowed the idea from the Tongan Prince. Life, I heard, was much safer in Vaté after this horrible atrocity.

In spite of these little eccentricities, I respected Maafu in life, if I did not reverence his official position under Sir Arthur Gordon. Over six feet in height, well-proportioned and stalwart, he was a man every inch of him, a king amongst men, born to command. If he had sacrificed many lives, it was because it was necessary to do so. He was not naturally bloodthirsty, like Thakambau. But Maafu, unlike Thakambau, did not repent. There was a great contrast in the mode of life of these two old rivals. Maafu had never been a savage like Thakambau, and, perhaps, did not feel that he needed the consolations of religion. He sailed about his vice-royalty in the Lau group in his yacht the *Xarifa*, once a crack craft in Sydney waters. He came down to Levuka occasionally to report to the Governor and draw his salary of £600 a year, which he immediately spent. "He had the tastes of an Irish gentleman of the olden time," said Mr. Thomas Parker, of Levuka, to me. At Loma Loma and Lakemba Maafu lived, surrounded by courtiers and Tongan and Samoan dancing girls. He had a cultivated taste for whisky and square gin, but also drank the native intoxicant *kava* by the bucketful, and his savage descent sometimes developed itself in a *penchant* for roast dog.

A thorough Gallio, Maafu never interfered in religious matters but once, and then, as usual, his action was decisive. In one of the islands under his jurisdiction a revival had broken out. The native minister, a man of great fervour, had become convinced, after much study of the Scriptures, that he was a saint, that angelic powers were conferred upon him, that he was possessed with the spirit of the Hebrew prophets of whom he read in "*Ai Volu Tabu.*" He convinced other people of his angelic powers, and a new religion was at once started. That might distress the missionaries, but not Maafu. He

remained at Loma Loma and drank *kava*, and the Samoan girls danced before him. But a new feature developed itself in this religious craze. The prophet heard voices; he had dreams which opened the future unto him; he was an angel sent to foretell the approaching end of the world. No use to plant yams this season; no use to pay taxes of native produce to Maafu, representative of England's Queen. The fear of the Lord compassed the people; they listened to the voice of their angel, and prayed night and day that they might be amongst the elect at the approaching judgment.

Then Maafu woke up and took action. He was not affected by the news of the ending of all things, but the condition of affairs in the present aroused his anger. I have said that Maafu was a wise and just ruler; and he fully recognised that one of the first duties of government consisted in the levying and collecting of taxes. When these islanders refused to pay theirs, the soul of Maafu was wroth within him. He sailed at once in the *Xarifa* with a body-guard of Tongans. No better sailorman ever lived than Maafu. I remember once, between Lakemba and Loma Loma, the old yacht was leaking badly, and was being baled out with buckets. It was certainly uncomfortable in the cabin. But Maafu, at the tiller, merely smiled, and said to his guests: "Don't fear; if the heart doesn't sink, the ship won't." It was a sentiment worthy of Nelson or Dundonald. On this occasion the *Xarifa* made good time to the island of zealots. When arrived, Maafu summoned the head men of the village before him. They came, crawling and crouching before their Tongan conqueror. Maafu sat on the deck splicing a rope.

"Fijians, why do you not pay your taxes? Why do you not work in your fields, and plant yam and taro for next year?"

Then the head men told him that the end of the world was close at hand, therefore there was no use in doing these things. An angel from heaven, in the shape of their minister, had come to warn them. They must devote their time to repentance and prayer. Then Maafu (to his Tongans)—

"Fetch this angel."

He was brought on board: with him a woman nursing a baby. The fanatic stood before Maafu, who quietly went on splicing the rope.

"So you are the man who tells these people to neglect their duties."

"I am an angel of the Lord sent to warn them."

"An angel? Ah! Who is that woman?"

"My wife. She is an angel too."

"Ah! And is that child yours?"

"Yes."

"You are an angel, and have a wife and child?"

"Yes."

Then Maafu rose, and with that wonderful change in his manner which in his anger awed all around him, cried,

"Oh! Fijians, how can this thing be, when it is written 'In heaven there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage.' Fools! overboard to your canoes. Pay your taxes, plant your yams, or it shall be the worse for you men of Viti. And, you woman, go ashore and suckle your baby; you will not see your husband for seven years. Set all sail."

And Maafu carried off "the angel" and kept him a prisoner in Lakemba for that term; and the new religion burst up, the people after a time returning to the ordinary duties of life.

Thakambau and Maafu are both gone to their place. The old cannibal died in 1883 in the odour of sanctity, and had a royal funeral. He was ever a good friend of the white man, and he never killed or ate a missionary. Peace to his memory! Maafu died in 1882 as he had lived—hard. In the convulsions of *tetanus* he uttered no groan, but would stretch out his arm and seize the wool of one of the faithful courtiers crouched around his bedside. Maafu then punched the head to which the wool belonged, and it relieved him, it did him good. The faithful one would crawl away without a murmur. This course of action, it is said, prolonged Maafu's life for many days, but he died at last, and one of the difficulties in the way of the succession to the Tongan throne was removed. May he rest in peace!

## CHAPTER V.

### AT NORFOLK ISLAND.

FOUR thousand miles apart in the South Pacific Ocean lie two small islands — one some eight hundred miles from the Australian coast, the other eastward, nearer the shores of the South American Continent. There is a strange connection between the two. The former of these, Norfolk Island, in the earlier decades of the present century, became one of the most noted of England's penal settlements. Its name was a terror to all convicts. It was their hell. Once sent there, they abandoned all hope. The criminal transportation system of Great Britain at that time could not well be worse, not only in its immediate effects, but in the future built up for the colony of New South Wales in the substratum of poverty and crime thus settled there. The lowest depth was at Norfolk Island.

The now-prosperous commercial city of Sydney was, as we all know, founded as a convict depôt. For many years New South Wales was only a criminal settlement, there being but two classes of society, the governing and official, and the transported gaol-birds of Great Britain. Bad as the transportation system was, evil in its effects then and thereafter, some endeavour was made to introduce a principle of selection, which is a first necessity in the attempted reformation of criminals. Early in the history of New South Wales Governor Phillips despatched a vessel to Norfolk Island with a living cargo of the most outrageous criminals transported to Sydney. From that time it became a convict settlement for convicts who had committed fresh crimes in New South Wales, or who were unamenable to discipline there. For fifty years Norfolk Island was the sewer for the scum of the moral filth poured out of Great Britain into the Australian colonies. What Cayenne was to France this was to England. If ever there was a hell on earth, this was one. The hand which held those re-convicted criminals in subjection

was necessarily one of iron, covered with no velvet glove. Over the portals of its vast prisons might well have been written, as on the gates of Dante's Inferno, "Lasciate ogni speranza voi ch' entrate." An army of guards and soldiers controlled the prisoners. They were worked like brute beasts, driven by the hard lash of the taskmaster in their arduous toil, making roads all around the island, and building huge barracks for the soldiers, prisons for their own occupation, and elegant houses for the officials. Worse than savage beasts many of them became! Any spark of humanity there might have been within them was stamped out in such an atmosphere of crime and violence. There were many attempts at mutiny; but on the slightest signs of insubordination prisoners were shot down like dogs. Numbers of them were daily tied up to the "triangles," and scourged till the life ebbed from them; and, refinement of cruelty, a convict was often made to wield the "cat" and punish his "mate." The lash, the gallows, and the bullet, maintained order. Inhuman though the whole discipline may appear, one does not very well see what else could have been done. Still, it is not surprising to read that occasionally convict "mates" drew lots as to which should kill the other, the survivor then taking his own life. Murders and suicides were of no rare occurrence. Crimes which cannot be hinted at here existed in the convict community. Soul as well as body was destroyed. There is no word to describe Norfolk Island in those days but "hell."

How different is the Norfolk Island of to-day. Enjoying almost the perfection of climate, with a soil fertile as any in the globe, it is the arcadian abode of a handful of happy people who, "far from the madding crowd" of the civilised world, pass there quiet peaceful lives, with nought but fleeting domestic shadows to crumple the rose-leaf of a healthy and contented existence. They live here in happy ignorance of wars and rumours of wars, until the events have become history. Political and social agitations, which stir nations and peoples to their depths, have for these residents of Norfolk Island no significance. The "taking off" of an Emperor, the election of a President, the rights of the *proletariat*, the Chinese question, even Home Rule, they reck little of. They have neither press, politics, party cries, grievances, sickness, poverty, or crime. They govern

themselves, forming a veritable commune, the only one I know of in the world. Ignorant, but not vulgar, this strange people, partly akin to us in race, owe their existence to the effects of a crime committed by their immediate ancestors, but one long since condoned by the voice of society. On them there rests no criminal stain. The offence their fathers were guilty of was not followed by associations of convict life, although they were liable to be hung at the yard-arm, and, if they escaped this punishment, might have been sent as prisoners to this very same isle, which their descendants so peacefully occupy.

Every schoolboy knows the story of the mutiny on board the British man-of-war, *The Bounty;* how the men rebelled against their commander, Captain Bligh, who showed himself then, as when Governor of New South Wales, an autocrat of the worst English type; how, bloodlessly and successfully, the crew took possession of the ship, and put their captain and his officers in the long-boat, with provisions and water, to seek land as they could. Their adventurous voyage across the Pacific, together with the subsequent proceedings of the mutineers, are narrated in scores of books designed to inspire youthful minds with a longing to run away to sea. The mutineers sailed to the Society Islands, were well received by the peaceful natives, and took unto themselves wives of the daughters of the land—took them in some cases as the Romans did the Sabine damsels, which led to complications with indignant relatives, in which a few of the English sailors were killed. The remainder sailed away with their partners to find some island not likely to be visited by British men-of-war, where they could live in peace, if not plenty. They came in time to the lonely rock of Pitcairn, rising from the Pacific, uninviting in aspect, not likely to tempt the captain of any stray vessel to land. But the mutineers found there sufficient shelter in the gorges, and soil fertile enough to raise food. Their ship was burnt to avoid detection; and when the disturbing element, the "grog," was all gone, they settled down happily, their simple wants provided for by fish of the ocean and fruits of the land.

Tended by their gentle wives, and with children born unto them, the whole nature of the mutineers appears to have changed, or their original nature to have been restored. It is the only case on record of a return to the first principles of existence

effecting such a result. The peaceful influence of their loving, innocent Tahitian wives had, I think, much to do with this, and with the qualities inherent in their descendants. So for long years the Pitcairn Islanders lived an isolated existence—"the world forgetting; by the world forgot." The mutiny of *The Bounty* had passed into history and story-book, when the fact that Pitcairn Island was inhabited was discovered by a passing vessel. The last of the mutineers was still living, an old man, patriarch of the little community. After this the island was occasionally visited by men-of-war; and from time to time stray accounts of this living romance appeared in English journals. New blood was infused into the settlement by a young white man taking up his abode and casting in his lot with the islanders. George Hunn Nobbs, an English youth, well-bred and educated, was apprentice in a merchant vessel, when the spirit of romance urged him to leave his ship and join this strange community. Seldom has an impulse been followed by better results. Setting an example of godly and righteous life, the new-comer acted for years as pastor and schoolmaster to his island neighbours. Himself married by the chaplain of a man-of-war which visited the place, he later on took the opportunity of returning to England, and was admitted into the Church, that he might render the offices of religion to his fellows, and give spiritual sanction to the union of the sexes. Through his advocacy a "Pitcairn Island Fund" was started in England, and many necessaries and comforts were from time to time forwarded for the use of the islanders.

But population increased faster than food; the area of cultivation in the island was barely sufficient to maintain the grandchildren of the mutineers; and famine was imminent in the future. The Rev. G. H. Nobbs sent pressing appeals to England. The romance of the situation excited sympathy there; and the result was that in 1856, when Norfolk Island was abandoned as a penal settlement, transportation to the colonies having been discontinued, its possession was transferred, as a free gift from the Crown, to the Pitcairn community. Over 200 souls were accordingly conveyed there in a Government transport during that year. They received not only the gift of the island, comprising fifteen square miles of land capable of tillage, eight hundred acres of which were cleared and fenced, and a large tract

of noble pine forests, but also all the eighty-one substantial buildings, including chapel, schoolroom, hospital, barracks, prisons, dwelling-houses, cottages, mills, and workshops. Added to these were furniture, artisans' tools, and agricultural implements. The gardens were stocked with seed, the fields with grain, and the farms with sheep, cattle, horses, pigs, and poultry. A truly royal gift this; and the islanders, accustomed in their former home to a hard life, must have felt at first embarrassed with the riches in their new possession.

A quarter of a century has passed, but Norfolk Island is still little known to the outer world. Whale-ships resort thither, the steamer from Sydney to the Fijis occasionally calls, and it has become the head-quarters of the Melanesian mission of the Church of England. But of the condition of the people themselves there has been no record; so I was very pleased at having the opportunity to spend a day on the island *en voyage* from Fiji to Australia. The steamer *Gunga* dropped her anchor in Cascade Bay at eight o'clock one evening, and we commenced to send up rockets to arouse the attention of the islanders, but our fireworks were wasted. We lay on the east side, the old convict settlement being on the west, but its harbour, Sydney Bay, has a dangerous surf. Genial Captain Saunders would not humour me by launching a boat; in the dark night it would, he said, be difficult to find a landing place, and even if safely ashore, I should infallibly break my neck in attempting to find a habitation. There were no houses within two or three miles of the shore, and a stranger could never strike the road to these; so we had to clothe ourselves with contentment until morning. At sunrise we were pulled ashore, landing at a rough stone pier under the rocks, over which the torrent fell which gave this bay its name. A surf breaks all around the island, but in Cascade Bay it is, in fine weather, toned down to a heavy ground swell. We saw some boats moored alongside the landing-place; others were pulled up on the beach; and two magnificent whaleboats were under a shed. The door of a large wooden hut was on the latch. Entering, we found it fitted up with bunks furnished with blankets and mattresses. Further along there were large cauldrons fitted into stone beds, with fireplaces underneath. It was in these that the whale oil was boiled down, and in the hut, during the season, the fishermen lived, ready for the signal,

"There she blows." Nothing was locked up or secured. One's first impressions were, that as locks, bolts, and bars were evidently unknown in Norfolk Island, theft was also an unknown quantity.

We toiled through a deep cutting, made by convict hands years ago, till we reached the top of the bluff, which overhung the landing-place. A broad road stretched out before us. The country presented a park-like appearance, with gently sloping hills covered with pines, and rolling downs brilliant with verdure and wild flowers. To the right, 1,100 feet high, towered Mount Pitt, the monarch of the island. The vegetation was very uniform, not tropical as in the Fijis I had just left, but more resembling that of Japan. There were no signs of human life. We "padded the hoof" past some houses and farm buildings, surrounded by thick hedges in the English style. There were some ruined stone buildings close at hand. The map with which I had provided myself showed that this was the "Cascade Station," an out settlement in the bad old times. It was too early for the inhabitants to be astir, and for some three miles we had a dusty walk without meeting a soul, although we passed several nice houses, which were all surrounded with gardens, displaying a luxuriance of vegetable wealth. Some of the land was fenced in and cultivated, but the rest seemed to be "common," on which the inhabitants ran their cattle as they pleased.

It was a hard walk to those who had acquired the tropical habit of conserving their strength. I especially felt for, and admired, the lady of our party, who, in a pair of the thinnest boots, toiled along unflinchingly. At last we arrived at the end of the uplands, and 400 feet below us saw the ocean once more. From the shore, extending along the foot of the hills, was a flat space of land about twenty acres deep. A creek and good roads ran along this, and immediately beneath us was the settlement of Sydney Bay. Ten or twelve acres were once covered with massive stone buildings, enclosed in high walls, but now all in ruins. Roofless and windowless, the former prisons and barracks were the abodes of bats and birds; they were but quarries whence the inhabitants drew material to build homes uncontaminated by convict associations. A flagstaff showed where the governor once resided. To the left was the cemetery. A fenced-in

paddock, about an acre in extent, showed where the governor formerly kept his favourite cob and milch cow. The private houses of the former officials, standing in nice gardens, and surrounded with clumps of pines, were evidently still occupied. Seaward were the Phillip and Nepean Islands. The surf rolled in heavily over a dangerous coral reef. Passage there was none, but the least dangerous spot was protected by a breakwater, permitting of a landing which, however easy to the Norfolk Islanders, who (both men and women) are, like their Tahitian ancestresses, at home in the surf, was never without peril to the ordinary sailor. Looking down from the bluff on the ruins of the past, I found the first view of Sydney Bay as impressive in the associations it called to mind as any place I had visited in the world.

Some of our party took the winding road, but I followed our lady passenger, who, hanging on to her husband's arm, boldly made a short cut down the face of the bluff. We wandered along deserted streets. Black-eyed, black-haired, and bare-footed children stared at us curiously from their playground inside the ruined barrack walls. Then some of our number caught a resident. As he approached, his serge suit, boots, and general bearing showed that he was not a native. More extraordinary still, he turned out to be a member of the press, being the resident correspondent of a Sydney newspaper. Mr. Robinson I found to be a gentleman who had drifted there after much globe-trotting, and settled down to a quiet, peaceful existence, free from the cares of the outside world. It seemed that even here I was known to repute, the "Vagabond Papers" being circulated and read; and so Mr. Robinson took personal charge of me, and did the honours of the island as a brother Pressman.

First, I desired to see the evidences of the past. The old commissariat establishment was the only building in thorough repair. It was a handsome three-storey erection. One entered by a flight of fifteen imported bluestone steps. This place was used as a courthouse, library, &c., and contained a portrait of Adams the mutineer. Next to this, the old officers' quarters were used as a school. Over the door was the inscription, "Major Anderson, 56th Reg., Commandant." All other buildings were unroofed, only the walls being left standing.

The main gaol was surrounded by a wall about eighteen feet high. Over the doorway was a trophy composed of leg-irons: one stood aghast at the grim humour of the designer. The buildings were a mass of ruins, but many of the cells on the ground tier were still whole. Some were spacious, about twenty feet square; but there were a large number which were only eight feet by six. There was a grim significance in the iron rings fixed in the wall of many of the cells, two on each side, so that two prisoners, chained like brute beasts, sat facing each other through the long hours of darkness listening to the moaning of the surf. An atmosphere of tears, and sighs, and curses hung around these pens. You wondered little at hearing of the ineffectual attempts to escape; that many had jumped into the harbour and were drowned; or that, but a few days before we had landed, two skeletons were discovered in a cave in Nepean Island. By some means the poor wretches reached there, and enjoyed their freedom till they died of hunger and privation. To each cell was a spyhole for the warders' use. The walls were covered with inscriptions, usually proper names. In some cases the occupant gave his birthplace; but no ribald humour was visible on these walls now, nor any artistic representations such as one would have expected from a "lifer" during his long hours of detention. Distinct from the other cells were two "black holes" of massive construction. These had been used for the most refractory. Some pits—known as the granaries—lined with masonry, and communicating with the surface by a circular opening, were said to have been punishment dens for the most incorrigible, whom even the dark cells would not tame. The buildings were all originally paved with flagging. Between two high walls a projecting beam was pointed out to us as the gallows. The walls of the gaol, as of all the buildings here, were pierced for musketry. In one loophole there was still a small rusty cannon.

The barracks showed signs of having been as strong as the gaol. The naked three-storey walls, with rows of iron-bound windows, and every approach commanded by outworks, indicated that the authorities had the ever-present fear lest the beings whom they treated like wild beasts should some day rise and tear them to pieces. Convict labour had been utilised in constructing a substantial seawall and a massive breakwater, 150 yards long, as well as in fencing-in the cemetery. This was nearly an acre

in extent, and contained about a hundred tombstones, most of them those of soldiers. One stone recorded that "F. Wright, died 1843; age, 105." Another set forth the piety of Major Ryan, who thus perpetuated the devotion of a prisoner of the Crown, drowned while fishing to supply the commandant's table. The earliest date was 1828. The convicts seldom had a stone to mark their graves; they rested there not only "unwept, unhonoured, and unsung," but also unnamed. One stone, however, with grim humour, set forth that he who lay below "died suddenly—hung." A large number of slight mounds marked where the convicts lay, free at last. A significant fact, narrated on the gravestones of many of the soldiers or warders, was "drowned," showing the danger of the landing. In the majority of the cases the inscriptions were barely decipherable. There was no "Old Mortality" to busy himself with the tombs of Norfolk Island. Pretentious vaults erected over officers' graves were likewise falling into decay. Better so; that every record of the dead past be obliterated. I believe that the early dispersion of the gaols was encouraged, as their existence was considered demoralising to a simple community like the present. A few more years will suffice for the reduction of all the old convict buildings, as the material is being rapidly utilised, and the elements will aid the process of destruction. But the works of permanent utility, such as bridges, roads, pier, seawalls, will long remain.

There cannot be a greater contrast to the peaceful island scenery and surroundings than these evidences of its former occupants, unless it is the condition of the present inhabitants. Having done with the dead past, we were taken round to be introduced to the living present. The private houses of the old officials were substantially built of pine, with shingle roofs, the interior was always flagged, and the gardens surrounded by stone walls. Our passengers were welcome everywhere, loaded with flowers and fruit, and gorged with milk. I was introduced to Christians, Youngs, Adamses, and Quintels without end. They were a fine, tall race, loose-limbed, olive-tinted, with dark eyes and black hair. There was a semi-tropical indolence in all their movements, and they spoke with the peculiar soft intonation which marked their Tahitian blood. Race told in the want of energy, and early associations in their distaste for shoes. The men

dressed in simple pants and shirt, the ladies in loose white gowns and straw hats adorned with wreaths of natural flowers. They wore flowers, too, in bands round their necks, as in Tahiti or Hawaii. Flowers blossomed everywhere in Norfolk Island. Some of the ladies, however, affected the vanities of city life in their head-gear and *chassure*. More beautiful women I had seldom seen in the world than these tall, stately ladies, *svelte*, yet with a bewitching languor in their dark eyes, and a temptation in their cherry lips, that made Norfolk Island a dangerous place for a susceptible man to visit. Children abounded in the streets; shy, lithe-limbed creatures, in whom as yet there was no sign of any deterioration of race, such as might have been expected through continual intermarriage.

Civil, hospitable, courteous, with no *gaucherie* or vulgarity, these people had a strange lack of curiosity as to what went on in the outer world. Like the members of all small communities, they imagined their local history was of absorbing interest to the passing stranger. Speak with a Quintel or an Adams, and any allusion to the early history of the Pitcairners, and the part their fathers played, is received as a high compliment. The most marked characteristics of these people are indolence, and the practice of the Christian virtues. The old Eve breaks out occasionally, but any lapse from the path of morality is generally condoned by matrimony. The government is patriarchal, the chief magistrate being chosen yearly. All capital offences would be sent to Sydney for trial—if there were any; but, speaking broadly, crime here is absolutely unknown. There are no public-houses, and I suppose, since the bad old convict days, a drunken man has been unknown at Norfolk Island, for the crews of the whalers which rendezvous here are not allowed ashore. The only topics of general interest appeared to be the movements of Bishop Selwyn, the price of whale oil, and the performances of the local cricketers. This people have a large amount of religious fervour, and although in their daily lives they live as innocently as anywhere in the world, yet they cultivate the hysterical form of devotion known as "Revivals." A dangerous schism had lately been introduced by a Yankee, who brought in a new religion, which threatened to assume serious dimensions. The principal feature in this was adult immersion with a flavour of Mormonism. The innovator, however, had happily been snuffed out.

The government is on the surface patriarchal. Nominally the island is a dependency of New South Wales. But in reality it is a true commune, the land being equally divided amongst the people. Each couple on marrying receive twenty-five acres of land, and materials to build a house. Two or three acres of this will be cultivated. The prolific soil readily yields every kind of vegetable and fruit, from sweet potatoes to the most marrowy of peas, and from bananas to strawberries. Turkeys, fowls, and pigs are also reared, and stock is run on the uncultivated acres and on the land yet unreserved for families. The inhabitants raise everything they want for their own needs, except in the matters of clothing and tobacco; and the fresh meat and vegetables with which they supply whalers or passing steamers furnish enough money to procure their simple raiment. Neither the one storekeeper, nor the one tailor, nor the one bootmaker is making a fortune. Occasionally a vessel from New Caledonia will take a cargo of live cattle. In whaling, too, which is a co-operative industry, considerable money is made. But a Norfolk Islander wants little beyond the necessities of life which he raises in such abundance on his own little farm. At present this system works very well, but when the rising generation grows up, all the available land will be disposed of, and some outlet will be needed for the surplus population, now over 400, and rapidly increasing. Some of the young men have gone as sailors in whaling ships, and capital hands they make; but, as a rule, the Islander has no ambition to better the easy, lazy, happy life he leads there. And who can blame him?

Viewing the rapid increase of population, and the absorption of all the available acres, some soreness was manifested by the few there who troubled themselves to think, at the sale by Sir John Young, or his Ministers, of 900 acres of land to the late Bishop Patteson for the Melanesian Mission. Norfolk Island, they said, was given as a free gift to the Pitcairners, and none of it should have been alienated by the Crown to any other body. Sir John Young had no right to sell the land. The only reply to this is that he did sell it, and the head-quarters of the Mission are established there. This is the *Propaganda Fide* of the Church of England in the South Seas. Natives from 200 various islands are taken there and trained in the devices of Christianity, and in reading and

writing in their native tongue, so as to be able to interpret the Scriptures. About 300 boys, girls, and young men are congregated together, and have, from their point of view, a rather good time of it. They have, first consideration to a savage, always plenty to eat. They have very little work to do, and they are supplied, according to the sex, with pink gowns, white shirts, and blue pants. I daresay they would be more comfortable without these, but the passion for clothes—that is, personal adornment, is instinctive in the savage breast.

Bishop Selwyn, at the time of my visit, was away at New Ireland, in the Mission schooner *Southern Cross*. I had had the pleasure of meeting him some years before. He left a very pleasant impression on me. He was a versatile priest; a sailor, carpenter, blacksmith, scholar, and gentleman. I remember one item in our conversation struck me forcibly. Bishop Selwyn, as a young man, was vicar of a parish in the Black Country. Knowing the locality, I remarked upon the ignorant brute life led by some of the people there. "Yes," said the Bishop, "in my parish there were thousands of men more degraded, more brutal, and more thorough savages than any of the natives of the Pacific." I did not exactly admit this; for if the Black Country collier does occasionally chew off his companion's ear or nose as a Sunday morning amusement, he does not eat him whole, or make head-hunting a permanent amusement, as they do in the Solomons. However, supposing the Bishop to be right, whence his call to the Pacific? I had lately been sojourning at the Wesleyan Mission at Navalua, in Fiji, and, although I was very much pleased with all the evidences of the care and devotion of the Rev. Lorimer Fison, still I did not feel inclined to be bored with any more specimens of the native "teacher" or native "preacher." These are very useful agents, no doubt, but they are just a little too good. I prefer a savage in his native state; he is far more interesting.

If the Bishop had been at home I should have been glad to renew my acquaintance with him, but he is generally away, cruising about his parish, which is a pretty extensive one. There were two Church of England clergymen at the mission; the chief was the Rev. R. H. Codrington, Fellow of Wadham College, Oxford, whose unremunerated connection with the Melanesian Mission dates almost from its earliest commencement. He was for nearly seven years the head of the mission, from the time of

Bishop Patteson's death until the consecration of Bishop Selwyn, an honour which he himself declined. His large-hearted philanthropy and general urbanity gained for him the profoundest respect and esteem of the whole community. There was also a doctor there, supported partly by the mission and partly by the inhabitants; but he had not much practice amongst the latter, the prevailing disease in Norfolk Island being old age.

The church of St. Barnabas, erected at the mission in memory of Dr. Patteson, the first Bishop of Melanesia, is the most important building in the island. The dimensions of the building are eighty feet in length by twenty-seven feet in interior width. Buttresses of great size support the roof, which is massive, and which, carried out to cover the buttresses, gives deep eaves and a broad shadow over the windows. The chancel is apsidal, with five trefoil-headed windows. In the apse Oamaru stone, from New Zealand, is used with the stone of the island—that is, stone from the gaol. The windows are built of it, and it is employed with excellent effect in bands and an ornamented string-course within. The windows have detached Devonshire marble shafts carrying the inner arch, and are filled with very beautiful stained glass, representing the Saviour in the centre with the four evangelists. These windows, the gift of the Dowager Viscountess Downe, are the work of Mr. Morris, of London, the cartoons having been drawn by Mr. Burne Jones. The floor of the apse is laid with Devonshire marble, in the ancient Italian fashion of what is called Opus Alexandrinum. A very beautiful reredos of black walnut wood, exquisitely carved and adorned with mosaic, was the gift of a gentleman in England, Mr. Gibbs. In this reredos, and in the very handsome altar cloth worked by a lady relative of the late Bishop, the palm branch is represented which was laid upon his corpse by the natives of Nakapu. The Devonshire marble pavement is continued in simple pattern down the aisle of the chapel. The pavement was partly given by relatives and friends of the Bishop, and partly laid as a memorial to the Hon. and Rev. Stephen Fremantle, who had acted as secretary for the Melanesian Mission in Oxford. The font, which stands near the entrance door, is composed of two large masses of black Devonshire marble, one forming the bowl, the other the pedestal. The latter is inlaid with panels of red marble; and the whole rests on two steps of the same material.

This magnificent font was specially presented by Bishop Patteson's sisters and nearer friends. The roof of the chapel is remarkably massive and ornamental, consisting of three principal trusses with king-posts, and three intermediate. The wind-braces form trefoiled arcades below the purlins. It is a remnant of the original design, which contemplated wooden walls, that the principal rafters are brought down to the ground throughout the chapel by solid posts of wood; these, though no longer perhaps so useful, are a striking feature of the interior. Between the posts a series of ogees form the heads of the window openings. The gable of the west end is of wood, weather-boarded, with a very large and handsome wheel window. This, with five lights beneath it, is filled with stained glass, placed by present and former members of the mission in memory of those of their number who have lost their lives in the work, viz., the Rev. Joseph Atkin, and Stephen Jaroaniara, of San Cristoval, who were shot at the same time with Bishop Patteson and the Norfolk Island young men, Edwin Nobbs and Fisher Young, at Santa Cruz, in 1864. The vestry is divided from the chapel by a screen of open work, executed in Auckland, of handsome effect, but very poorly carved. The organ chamber is occupied by a small but excellent instrument by Willis, presented, with much substantial aid besides, by Miss Yonge, the author of "The Life of Bishop Patteson." The stone in the interior is all worked smooth, and nothing plastered. Outside, the buttresses only are of smooth hammered stone, the rest being left rough. The height of the building is forty-five feet. A small wooden cross at the gable end, and one of iron above the apse, are the only ornaments; a bell-tower, which formed part of the design, having been omitted, or postponed, for lack of funds.

Instead of visiting the mission, I sat down to a late breakfast in the house of a Quintel, an Adams, or a Young, the families being all so much mixed up that I could not tell which was my host. A dozen beautiful women played the part of hostesses. Hospitality was no word for the way in which they treated us. We were waited on by these Junos in a manner which would have converted a dish of herbs into a feast; but the stalled ox was nothing to the repast furnished. Grilled fowl, ham, eggs, sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes, peas, beans, cauliflowers, bananas, and strawberries and cream. After the miserable

*cuisine* of the *Gunga* this was indeed a banquet fit for the gods. I did not even desire anything better with which to wash this down than the draughts of pure milk, preferring such to the tea. Our hostesses were simply charming, and when I was told that, although as a rule settlers were discouraged, still, in consideration of my character, I should, if I liked to stop, be furnished with a wife and twenty-five acres of land, I felt very much inclined to throw all my responsibilities and duties to the winds and to settle down there. Some day, before I get too old, I may yet take advantage of the offer. Here we found the captain of the American whaler *James Arnold,* who had been cruising in these waters for many years, and was more at home in the island than in Boston.

It was with real regret that I said good-bye, and took horse for a lonely scamper over the island. This animal had been obtained for the lady of our party, but he scorned to bend 'neath the weight of a stranger. He kicked up his heels and indulged in other vagaries which, there being no side-saddle, induced our lady to prefer walking. Then he was offered to me. Now, even in my best days, I have not been one to witch the world with noble horsemanship. I never aspired to seek the bubble reputation on the buckjumper's back. But when it came to a question between enforced walking and riding, I was prepared to risk somewhat. This Norfolk Island horse was of small stature: I should not have far to fall. Besides, I trusted that my fifteen stone avoirdupois would break the beast's spirit, if not his back. I was right. After an indignant plunge or two, finding that he could not unship me, my charger resigned himself to the arduous task of climbing the hill.

Arrived on the uplands, I had a pleasant canter towards the mission station. The roads were excellent, the streams all well bridged. There were plenty of cattle grazing on the broad savannahs. The beasts, although in good condition, were of small size. The increase was so rapid that with them, as with the human population, it would soon be a question as to means of subsistence. The inhabitants here had more milk and meat than they knew what to do with. Otherwise there was no sign of animal life. I saw two species of parrot and some small birds, but not in any great number. I should think this island would be well adapted for English song-birds. Larks have been successfully acclimatised in Fiji, and should do far better here.

The pine forests to which I came were beautiful. Not tropical, not Australian—the foliage here reminded me more of Japan than of any place I could call to mind. A lonely ride in a strange country is ever full of charm, and I was sorry when I felt that, unless I wished to be left behind, I must turn my horse's head towards the landing-place. As I approached the Cascade Station a youth on horseback overtook me. He was dressed in a white shirt and light pants, and wore a peaked naval cap, but his feet were bare. He was about sixteen years old, with a handsome, intelligent face. The horse he rode was a good one, and he sat in the saddle with an ease and grace which I envied. I said "Good-day," and he returned the salutation, raising his cap with a dignity and courtesy which one would not find surpassed in Pall Mall. "What is your name?" I asked. "William Christian." This was the grandson of the midshipman of *The Bounty*, of whose doings I had so often read. "Are you the gentleman from Sydney?" he inquired, "the ——?" I admitted the accusation; when, showing a magnificent bouquet which he carried, "I have brought this for you," said he. This little act of courtesy was very pleasing to one's vanity. A perfect gentleman was young William Christian, and I enjoyed his company very much. We stopped at a farm near the Cascade Station, which belonged to his father, and I hurriedly inspected the farm buildings and some special live stock, the pride of the island. But time pressed, and we rode off to the landing-place. Here we found that all the boats had been put in requisition to visit the *Gunga*, and the number of horses hitched up to the rails showed that a large number of the inhabitants of Norfolk Island were making this a holiday. We went on board in one of the large whaleboats, crowded with some forty people; but she rode beautifully over the heavy swell. It was the finest boat I had ever been in, and was made in America, being far superior to and very little dearer than anything in the lifeboat line which the islanders had had from Sydney.

Arrived at the *Gunga*, I found Captain Saunders's cabin occupied by Mr. Francis Mason Nobbs, chief magistrate of the island—son of the patriarch who, eighty-five years of age, still lived, hale and hearty, and ministered to the spiritual wants of the people with whom he had cast his lot. Mr. Francis Nobbs was also postmaster, assessor, and, in fact, combined in his

person all the executive and official functions of the settlement. But this happy people had the least amount of government possible in any community. Mr. Francis Nobbs was an educated gentleman, having been trained in England, where one of his brothers—a native of Pitcairn—was a clergyman of the Church of England. At present he was making up the mail, which, although the last was three months back, was a very light one. With the exception of the clergyman at the mission, Mr. Nobbs and Mr. Robinson, none there had correspondents in the outer world. The *Gunga* was overrun with island beauties and their male relations. I was introduced to many, and the offer of twenty-five acres and a wife was repeated. The signal for departure was at length given. I shook hands with Mr. Nobbs, Mr. Robinson, my young friend Christian, and with Quintels, Adamses, and Youngs by the score. As the boats left the ship we were favoured with hearty cheers—one for the passengers, one for the ship, and one for Captain Saunders, who there, as wherever else he sailed, was deservedly popular.

As I watched Mount Pitt and the high peak of Phillip Island disappear from view, I thought what a charming retreat it would be for worn-out business men who desired for a time complete change, quiet, and rest. Good plain food, air, and exercise in the perfection of climate, and communion with a simple people, would renovate body and mind. In this beautiful and peaceful spot one's soul would become purified. I live in hopes of being able "some day" to pass a few months there, and renew the acquaintance of the artless people who were so kind to me during the day spent ashore at Norfolk Island.

# CHAPTER VI.

## NEW CALEDONIA.

NEW CALEDONIA is situated within the tropic of Capricorn, between the parallels 20° and 23° of south latitude. It is on the meridian of longitude 166° east of Greenwich. It runs south-east and north-west, and after New Zealand is the largest island in the South Seas, being about 180 miles in length by 30 to 40 in breadth. The distance between New Caledonia and the Australian continent is some 700 miles. A high mountain range, the *Chaîne Centrale*, runs from south to north, forming a backbone to the island, and being the source of numberless streams which feed the rivers fertilising the valleys. The forests and dense vegetation are tropical, of much the same character as in New Guinea, for in New Caledonia, as in Papua, a species of *Eucalyptus* is found. This, which is called the *niaouli*, as in Australia, adds greatly to the salubrity of the country, the aromatic odours which fill the air of the "bush" being evidences of the volatile essences which kill the germs of miasma. Mr. Joseph Bosisto, M.P., C.M.G., the celebrated chemist, President of the Royal Commission for Victoria at the Colonial Exhibition, recently pointed out that Australia possesses the finest climate in the world through "the increasing health factor, the extra amount of active oxygen supplied to the atmosphere by the odorous essences of the *Eucalyptus*." We in the Colonies hardly recognise what a Heaven-sent friend to man and beast is the eucalypt. "To the thousands on thousands of cattle and sheep grazing over the pasture-lands of the country it gives shelter from the midday sun, and from dewy night. The wandering 'swagsman' or the travelling bushman, reaching no homestead at sundown, finds rest under its wide-spreading branches, and often shelter within some patriarchal gum-tree, which, although standing firm and erect, has become, through old age, hollow in the centre, with space sufficient to afford him, or even half-a-dozen other persons, a comfortable rest-house for

the night. To many of the early pioneers of Australia have these trees given a nightly home; and many a meal of damper and mutton, and many a smoke from the pipe of peace have been partaken inside their cavernous recesses." But above all, the eucalypt vegetation exercises a sanitary effect on the climate. Mr. Bosisto, as the discoverer of "eucalyptus oil," now included in the British *pharmacopœia*, has conferred a distinct benefit upon mankind. And so the *niaouli* in New Caledonia likewise gives to the atmosphere an extra amount of active oxygen, and tends to make this the healthiest of all the islands in the South Seas.

New Caledonia is a land of the gum-tree and the convict; but there its similarity to early Australia ceases. There are no marsupials here; in fact, there are no animals at all except the "flying fox," the great vampire bat of the Pacific, and a small species of rat. Feathered life, too, is very rare. One occasionally meets with pigeons and parrots, but the forests and bush are generally silent. One hears neither the song of a bird nor the flutter of a wing. Its mountain heights are sombre and forbidding. But they contain mineral treasures which have not yet been sufficiently exploited. Copper, nickel, antimony, gold, are all found in New Caledonia. And as the area adapted for cultivation is comparatively small, it is in the development of its mineral resources that the legitimate prosperity of New Caledonia should in the future lie.

New Caledonia was discovered by Captain Cook on the 4th September, 1774. He named Cape Colnett, and the Isle of Pines, the latter from the only species of tree growing thereon. Two boats of his expedition traversed the chain of the great reef which surrounds New Caledonia. It was on the north, at Balade, that Captain Cook first saw the natives. His relations were friendly with them, although they were reputed to be cannibals, a character which they to the present time justify. After Cook, came the great but ill-fated mariner La Pérouse, who was lost at Vanikoro. Admiral Bruny d'Entrecasteaux, who, in 1791, was despatched in search of La Pérouse, reports the natives of New Caledonia as being cannibals. For forty years the island appears to have been unvisited, except by some early "beach-comber," runaway sailor, or escaped convict. In 1853 New Caledonia was formally taken possession of by the French Government, although by right of discovery it

belongs to Great Britain. New Caledonia, for a few years previous to that time, had a sprinkling of English population engaged in the island and sandal-wood trade with the natives. The French did not want New Caledonia for purposes of commerce, but to make it a penal depôt. For years afterwards New Caledonia was quite unknown to the general public in Australia. A few smart merchants, of whom a Mr. John Higginson was chief, grasped all the trade, and acquired all the contracts for provisions and supplies for the convicts and troops. In 1872 New Caledonia became known to the outer world as a place of deportation for the Communists who were sentenced by court-martial at Versailles. The convicts were settled on the island of Nou, the Communists on the peninsula of Ducos, and on the Isle of Pines. The thousands thus added to the population caused Noumea to become a place of commercial importance.

From the first, the French authorities paid no attention to any rights which the natives, called by the generic term of *Canaque*, might be presumed to have in the soil. It is said that the Canaques of New Caledonia numbered 60,000. Their villages were situated in the valleys which run between the spurs of the mountain range. The natives were divided into a number of tribes, and the language or dialect was often completely different. The long stretch of sea-coast afforded a plentiful fish diet; but the arable land of the country was, in proportion to the population, limited in extent. I think the natives made the most of it. Their fields of taros and of yams, and their plantations of bananas, were carefully tilled. The French authorities seized the most fertile valleys, on which they planted *pénitenciers agricoles*, or leased them to free colonists employed in cattle raising; and, in some parts, cultivating sugar and coffee. The exploitation of the copper and nickel mines was another source of prosperity to the merchants of Noumea. In every case the natives were treated—as too often the natives of Australia have been—as *feræ naturæ*, having no personal right in the land. French colonists tore down the fences which the Canaques had raised to protect their crops; and an English settler boasted to me that he was humane, in that he allowed the natives to take up the yams they had planted, before clearing them off the land which he had leased from the government, but on which they had lived for years in established villages! The Canaques were employed by the government and

the settlers in menial offices, and as native police, to track down escaped convicts, and were generally looked upon as good-humoured, peaceful, cowardly beings, whom it was safe to kick and otherwise ill-use in the manner a Frenchman loves.

Once or twice, however, the Canaque worm has turned. In 1867, at Pouebo, some gendarmes and a French family were killed by the natives, and, as they say, eaten. In 1868 six soldiers were also killed and eaten; but these souvenirs did not appear to have impressed Governor Pritzbuer. Early in 1878 the fertile valley of Fokalo was taken from the natives to add to the ground already used in connection with the *pénitenciers agricoles* in the district. The great chief Atai protested against this, and saw Governor Pritzbuer at the Government House at Teremba, on the west coast of the island.

"You have enough land," said the French official; "there on the hills is sufficient place for you."

Then Atai, with rude imagery, took up a handful of stones, and dropping them on the ground, said—

"You have left us nothing but these!"

Atai went to the hills. It would have been better, perhaps, for the French if they had never driven him there. The fire of insurrection had been smouldering for a long time, and in June, 1878, it burst out. It was stated that all through New Caledonia there was to be a general rising of the natives. Whether this be so or not, the majority of the tribes on the west coast rebelled or were driven into rebellion. Many French lives were lost, there being over 200 massacred in one week, and the insurrection was only put down after many bloody reprisals. It was during this war that I first spent some months in New Caledonia, as correspondent of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, in company with the troops, and had full opportunity of studying how France treats a native population. Living, too, as I often did, in convict depôts, with convict servants waiting upon me, I had a chance of investigating the French penal system as it is in New Caledonia, and how it is likely to affect the future of Australia.

Twelve hours after the news arrived in Sydney of the native insurrection I sailed for New Caledonia. My very dear and esteemed friend, the late Mr. Hugh George, then general manager of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, saw me off. It is

seldom that any other nationalities but English-speaking ones are seen on the wharves of Sydney. Our Chinese brother is of course excepted. He, like the poor, is always with us; and, like poverty, we look upon him as a disagreeable necessity. When I walked round the Circular Quay and on to the deck of the steamer, I found a familiar foreign element, but one not often met with or noticed in Australia. One may live in our large cities for years and not hear a word of French spoken. So it was a novelty to listen to twenty or thirty people talking in that polite language, with the earnest vehemence and animated gesticulation without which the Gaul finds it impossible to carry on a conversation. Some few of these were passengers, the remainder had come to bid good-bye to their friends, or to take a look at the steamer which carried the tricolor, and was bound for a colony belonging to "*la belle France*." As England is always "old," and America "great," so France is lovingly known by her sons as the country "*la belle*" *par excellence*. And she deserves the title. When we sheered off the familiar sounds of "Pigeon English," conveying the commands of the second mate, drew attention to the fact that we had a Chinese crew. With the exception of the officers, stewards, and three quartermasters, who steered, all on board the vessel were Celestials. There were twenty-five in all, twelve seamen and thirteen firemen. I understood £100 a month was saved in wages by the employment of this Asiatic labour, besides a further amount in food, the *chow* chiefly consisting of rice, a nourishing and cheap diet.

Four days of fine weather and monotonous meals. Then, at daylight on the fifth morning, we sighted land, and by ten o'clock were well up near the lighthouse. It is astonishing how much one part of the earth, at a distance, resembles another. The coast here seemed to be, at the first glance, very like Northern Queensland. Again, it resembled Porto Bello, on the west coast of Mexico. Another look, and I thought it was the neighbourhood of Algiers. As we got nearer we passed through a nest of coral reefs, many in circles, inside which, in time—thousands of years it may be—islands will be formed. In these future lagoons there is a beautiful green, calm, treacherous sea. Outside, the dark blue ocean waves, sixty fathoms deep, dash themselves into foam. The pilot was rowed on board by six

stalwart natives. Steering between the reefs and the land, we sighted Noumea, situated on a bay formed by Ile Nou, the convict settlement, on which the barracks of the square ugly French type were the buildings which first obtrude themselves on one's view. Then we saw the hospital and government establishments, some with red-tiled roofs. The houses of the citizens were scattered about the hill-sides. Tropical vegetation was to be seen everywhere. In the harbour the large transport frigate, the *Tage*, a coasting steamer, one or two gunboats, and a few sailing craft. High up on the hill the Freemasons' lodge, known as "The Devil's Own" in Noumea. This was closed for a long time, since Rochefort's escape, in fact; but Governor Olry, a liberal man, again permitted the assembling together of the initiated.

The chief point of interest on our arrival in Noumea was the avidity with which the citizens, both English and French, rushed on board for the Sydney papers. Some of the accounts of the insurrection appeared to surprise them very much—as well they might. But the Sydney press exercises an influence in another way. When the mail agent makes out his report, which is sent, with the list and names and particulars of passengers, to the Governor, he also gives a review, a condensed summary of European politics. This he compiles from the cable despatches of the special correspondents of the Australian papers. Fleet Street may thus be said to direct the foreign policy of New Caledonia.

## CHAPTER VII.

### CAMP LIFE.

NOUMEA I found a pretty, well laid-out, and well-kept city in embryo. It is true many of the houses were of wood, but they were therefore so much the better adapted to a tropical climate. Many of them were most elegant residences. An Australian visitor, accustomed to the roughness and uncouthness of our new colonial bush towns, would be astonished at the neatness and attractiveness that is often visible in Noumea. The side-walks are good, and the town has a magnificent supply of water from a reservoir on an adjacent hill; and if there is no gas, the streets are fairly lighted with oil lamps. The *Hôtel du Gouverneur*, if it resembles a Swiss *châlet*, standing, as it does, in beautiful gardens, seems in accordance with the climate and the surroundings; and the friendly and courteous reception I met there from Governor Olry could not be surpassed in a palace.

The day after my arrival in Noumea I had an audience with Governor Olry. I had intended to pay my respects to his Excellency at an early date; but, my advent being at once made known to him, on the first morning an aide-de-camp visited me with an intimation that the governor wished to see me. This, of course, in a French settlement, was equivalent to a command. In company with my friend, Mr. Numa Joubert, I, at the appointed hour, arrived at the government buildings, situated at the bottom of the pleasant garden surrounding the house of the governor. After the customary delays and introductions, we at last were ushered into the office of his Excellency, a plain, unpretending room, evidently meant for work. Governor Olry was a fine, stalwart man, of about fifty years of age. He always wore the uniform of his rank in the French navy; without a uniform, even the governor would lose respect here. He received me most courteously. Mr. Joubert's introduction was a voucher for my identification and respectability. Having tendered my respects on behalf of myself and the *Sydney Morning*

*Herald*, and explained the nature of my mission, I requested a permit to visit the scene of action, and a passport to carry me through New Caledonia. After hearing Mr. Joubert, the Governor promised to give me every assistance and facility, and I made my adieus, most favourably impressed with the kindness and courtesy shown to me.

Governor Olry did more than I expected. My best thanks are due to him for the facilities given to me, which French, and even English authorities are not always ready to tender to an independent journalist, whose criticisms may be unfavourable. The same night I received from Captain Blanchard, the chief of the staff, a letter authorising me to proceed to "the front," other letters to the commandant at Bouloupari, and the captains of men-of-war on the coast, and a general circular to the chiefs of posts and divisions in which "the governor recommended in a manner all particular" the author of these pages, and "prayed that every assistance should be given to him during his travels in New Caledonia." The signature, "L. Olry," was attached to all these. Certainly I could not have expected more, if so much. I wanted to get to the scene of action at once, and the following morning was in negotiation with the master of the *Rose*, a small steam launch, to take me to Bouloupari on the next day, when another letter came from Captain Blanchard, in which he said that Lieutenant-Colonel Wendling was proceeding on the following Tuesday to Bouloupari, to take charge of the operations, and the governor thought I might like to go with him. This being Saturday, there was only a delay of two days, so I was glad to accept the offer. Mr. Joubert introduced me to Colonel Wendling. He was a fine, soldier-like man with Flemish features, being a native of Lorraine. The colonel was working hard in his office, minus coat and vest. He was kind and courteous, and expressed himself at my disposal in everything. But he warned me that in the camp I must be prepared to rough it, and that I must not take much baggage with me; "I also go as 'les autres,'" said he. After the death of Colonel Galli-Passeboc, Lieutenant-Colonel Alexis Wendling was commander of the forces in New Caledonia, comprising the marine infantry, to which he belonged, the artillery, and the gendarmerie.

But French marines are not like English. The latter are soldiers both by sea and land; the former comprise a force re-

cruited especially for land service in the colonies and at the naval depôts of Brest and Cherbourg. Thus, the life of a French marine is passed between Senegal, Cayenne, Martinique, Cochin China, Pondicherry, and New Caledonia. The length of service in each colony is three years, with the exception of Senegal and Cayenne, where, owing to the unhealthiness of the climate, the term is only two years. On leaving a colony the marines have generally about a year in France, at one of the naval depôts, prior to being sent out to another part of the globe. It will be seen that Algeria is not included in the above list; but that is considered as a province of France, and has a Governor-General —a high and mighty personage. All the other colonies being beyond the seas, are under immediate control of the naval department of France; hence the infantry recruited for service there is styled "marine," and its soldiers wear the anchor on their collar and buttons. The governors of these colonies are always naval men, their posts being considered as the prizes of the department. But in truth these are not very great prizes. General Olry's yearly remuneration is only about a third of the income which New South Wales and Victoria give to the pro-consuls of Great Britain. But the Governor of New Caledonia was not only a man of family, but also of large private fortune; and he thought more of the honour of his post than of its emoluments. Frenchmen always love power and position. But in New Caledonia the governor has no sinecure, he "does govern." He is responsible to none. With a stroke of his pen he can order the banishment of any citizen. There is no appeal. After Henri Rochefort's escape, a leading merchant of Noumea received notice to quit, and the masonic lodge was closed, through presumed complicity of its members in the flight of the Communist leader. From morning till night the governor worked in his office. Everything came before him—even the advent of an insignificant personage like myself was at once known. So, all in all, I think he was comparatively anything but well paid.

I left my temporary abode in the Maison Lise, Noumea, at half-past five on the morning of the 30th of July. The previous day I had spent in procuring necessary and unnecessary articles for campaign life, the latter, I believe, predominating. The many kind friends to whom I said "good-bye," and who bewailed my approaching fate at the hands of *les Canaques*,

had each and all suggestions to make as to what I must take with me. Colonel Wendling declared that a mosquito net, made tent fashion, was indispensable; others said it would be useless. However, I had it manufactured. By the time I had procured one quarter of the things I was informed it would be "impossible to live without," I found I could not take the articles I myself wanted. So I only purchased a sheath knife and a few pounds of tobacco, with which I felt equal to either scalp or bribe any solitary Canaque whom I might meet with. Everybody wanted to lend or give me a revolver, although I had two very good weapons of my own. One dear friend would insist on my taking his pistol—it was charged, however, with cognac. The same gentleman got quite angry because I would not accept his writing-case filled with all the luxurious materials for polite correspondence. In sooth, if I had purchased all the articles recommended to me, and accepted those offered to be lent or given, several Saratoga trunks would have been required to convey them all to the seat of war, and Colonel Wendling had issued the edict that my baggage must be kept within reasonable proportions.

Captain Carter had kindly left orders with one of his volunteers of the night patrol to call me at five, but I was awake before that hour, and had finished dressing, when a heavy step tramped along the verandah, and an armed man entered my room. With chassepot and bayonet and revolver he was terrible to behold, but in his speech he proved a very mild young gentleman. A clerk in one of the merchants' offices in Noumea, he had been one of the volunteers who went to the front after the first news of the outbreak. We had a drink of whisky, and my companion gave me further advice—I ought to take a good rifle with me. It would be such fun to pick off the Canaques when they were dancing about on the hills. I did not quite see where the fun came in, certainly not to the Canaques, and I am not bloodthirsty enough to take delight in potting human beings. For self-defence my revolvers were sufficient. Going into the verandah, I called out loudly to the two New Hebrides boys, whose native names have been Anglicised into "Mike" and "Tim." They slept somewhere in the back premises. My shouts for a time only provoked a chorus of *sacrés* and hearty British oaths from the suffering boarders in the house,

whose rest was thus rudely disturbed. At last the two grinning, sleepy boys appeared, and after bidding sad adieus to a friend we started, Mike carrying my valise, and Tim my blankets. In the street a few market carts from the suburbs were already gathering, and some cafés and shops were opened. But on the Quai the gloom was intense, and the figures of the soldiers, drawn up in line, could only just be seen. They were all in heavy marching order. Colonel Wendling, with blanket slung around him like a common soldier, walked up and down conversing with Mr. Hughan. We waited whilst a loaf of bread was served out to each man. Boats from Ile Nou, opposite, landed a number of convicts, who worked in the city; these had to rise full early. Then the roll was called, and barges rowed by semi-naked New Hebridians came alongside to convey us on board the transports. As the baggage was being loaded, a large, covered portmanteau was carried past us. "Whose is that?" asked Colonel Wendling. "It is mine," said a tall, handsome Breton sous-lieutenant. "And you, are you going to Paris or to Bouloupari, that you travel thus?" The young officer blushed at the rebuke, but the portmanteau was allowed to be taken on board.

The *Perrier* was a small steamer, one of the half-dozen which acted as coastguard boats; the baggage and half the men were taken on this, the remainder going in the *Rose,* which had been chartered for the occasion. The latter boat proved by far the quickest, and steamed ahead of us, gaining ground at every turn of the screw. One last look at the *Gunga* and peace; we were *en route.* "*Malbrook se va t'en guerre,*" sang a young officer gaily. The grey dawn grimly shadowed forth the town of Noumea, the convict establishment of Ile Nou opposite, which presented the appearance of a large town, the settlement of some of the Communist prisoners, on a peninsula below Noumea, the hills of the coast line, and the *Chaîne Centrale.* Then old Sol arose in his glory, and gilded first the rugged mountain tops, whilst all below was in shadow. The coast reminded me of that of Queensland but for the high range behind. The coral islands and reefs, inside which we steamed, formed a sea-wall, against which the outside surf beat fruitlessly; so the shore is lapped by ever peaceful waves. Now and then on the coast we saw the stations of some "colons," with fields around of maize and

lucerne, giving a bright and refreshing colour. We sat in the bows of the *Perrier*, and smoked cigarettes or played with a little kitten—your French soldier will derive childlike amusement from the most trivial and innocent thing. The commander of the *Perrier* was a naval officer who could play baccarat with any man living. I don't know if Madeira is quite *comme il faut* before breakfast, but the bottle which this gentleman opened for us was decidedly appreciated.

In time the awning was spread, and the table laid for *déjeuner*. The captain was hospitable, and treated us to rare wines and liqueurs from his private store. All went merry as a marriage bell; I began to like the war-path; when suddenly the engine broke down. Then *Sacré Dieus*, and thunders, and names of little blue dogs were appealed to, but inanimate matter can stand any amount of cursing. The captain was in despair. But I was quite content to go on enjoying his hospitality. If no breeze arose, it was a question when we would arrive. The soldiers' case was the hardest, as they had only had their bread and their small rations of rum—the "tafia" of the country—distributed from the *cantines* of the corporals. At one o'clock, however, we managed to get on way under sail, passing in time into the Bay of St. Vincent, close to the land, high and rocky, and showing its volcanic origin. A high peak was seen in the distance. "That is Ouitchambo, where the rebels are," said Colonel Wendling to me. At three o'clock we arrived alongside a small sloop of war, the *Gazelle*, which protects Buraki, the port for our destination, Bouloupari. In fact, the *Perrier* distinguished herself by running into the *Gazelle*. We landed in the boats, which could not get near the rocks. The soldiers waded ashore, whilst I was carried on the back of a sailor.

Buraki, seventy miles from Noumea, is one of the most miserable holes in New Caledonia. Situated on a rocky knoll, surrounded by swamps, it is the chosen home of mosquitoes. It was formerly a gendarmerie station, but is now a military post, being temporarily commanded by an unhappy sous-lieutenant of the *Tage*. He had a thatched hut to live in; and a few other wretched habitations, inhabited by convicts and sailors, constituted Buraki. These convicts were then making a pier. Some malignant-looking pigs were the only signs of animal life, with the exception of half-a-dozen horses browsing in the little cocoanut

grove. These appertained to the officers from Bouloupari, who had come over to meet Colonel Wendling. A horse had been brought for him, but there was none for me, so I had the alternative of walking with the troops, or taking a seat on the baggage-waggon. Those who know me will not be surprised that I chose the latter.

The cavalry started off first, and then we formed in regular order, with advance and rear-guards, the other men in two sections, the baggage-waggon in the centre. I sat in the rear of this, and conversed with my Breton lieutenant. For some miles the road was particularly uninteresting. On the ridges through which we passed the only sign of vegetation was the niaouli tree, the native name for a species of eucalyptus, whose bark is used for making huts. But when we entered the valley of the Ouameni the scene changed. Here we saw the remains of the sugar mill belonging to M. de Kervegnen, the largest and most important industry, in its day, in the colony. The mill and surrounding houses were burnt by the natives. This was the first sign of the war which I had seen. In a paddock some milch cows looked desolate; they missed their human masters, and lowed at us mournfully as we passed. The stream, fringed with vegetation and overlaying trees, was beautiful; and to its clear water the heated soldiers rushed for a drink. An orange tree was found on the bank, and the golden fruit was shaken down and scrambled for during the five minutes' halt; but this native orange is not very good. *En route* once more. By degrees the baggage-waggon became loaded up, as one tired soldier after another ran and deposited his blanket and haversack therein. This license was allowed by the officers, who permit a great deal more freedom than in the English army. I sat enthroned amongst the blankets, quite comfortable, but feeling rather mean when I saw the soldiers tramping after me. After a ten mile walk, just before sundown, we sighted Bouloupari, which is situated on the knoll round which flows a little river—the Ohya. The fringe of trees and shrubs which beautified its banks had been cut down, for fear it should afford cover to any lurking Canaque.

Bouloupari consisted of some dozen huts and houses, formed of mud walls, like the adobe in Mexico, and with thatched roofs. But the head-quarters of the commandant were in the

old house of the lieutenant of gendarmes, inside the recently-erected stockade. This, constructed of the trunks of the niaolui placed side by side endways in the ground, was of irregular form, and included within its limits the head-quarters, stores, corral for horses, and a double circular row of low sheds constructed of bark and leaves, like the mia-mias of Australian aborigines, where the soldiers camped at nights. Four very tall poles supported a small platform, on which a sailor, with trained eyes, long used to scanning distances at sea, kept watch and ward. The ascent to this was by a ladder which it required steady nerves to climb. Captain Cailhet, of the *Tage*, the commandant of the port, welcomed us. The governor's letter assured me a cordial reception, and Dr. Lassouarn, the medical officer in charge, to whom I owe many thanks for courtesies, took me in hand. The first question was as to where I should camp. The house of the lieutenant of gendarmes only contained three rooms, which were all full. Some of the huts outside the stockade were occupied by three or four officers, and even a little pavilion in the garden had three tenants. An alternative was presented as to whether I would assist in overcrowding one of the huts, or would sleep on the verandah inside a cane screen. I chose the latter, and was assured that it was the most comfortable and healthy. An iron bedstead, spoil from one of the neighbouring farmhouses, was procured for me, and after spreading my blankets on this, and performing some necessary ablutions, under circumstances of considerable difficulty, I sat down at the mess-table to eat my first meal in Bouloupari.

An open shed covered with bark formed our *salle-à-manger*. It was pleasant to dine thus in fine weather with a look-out on to the star-spangled heavens. My friend, the doctor, introduced me to some of the officers who had been stationed there since the first establishment of the camp a month ago. There was the gay and witty captain of marines, who bore the distinguished title of Etienne Philibert Renè de la Follye de Joux. He was from Burgundy, and would crack sardonic jokes or slay Canaques alike carelessly. Captain de Joux (as we called him shortly) was in command of the only expedition where there had been any real fighting, and, from an English mounted volunteer, I heard that he bore himself bravely, as became one of his name; for in spite of all the reports in Noumea, the natives had seldom faced

the French soldiers. In this instance, in large numbers they attacked the rear-guard of the troops which had burnt their villages, firing and throwing spears at them from the bush. This was all they would do. The nonsense which was talked about the natives being possessed of a great knowledge of military tactics was absurd. If Atai (the presumed head and front of the rebellion) had had a knowledge of warfare, even to the amount possessed by a Sioux chief, he could have made things remarkably unpleasant for the denizens of the camp at Bouloupari; but, in truth, after the first bloodly outbreak and easy victory achieved over the defenceless, the natives had never attempted to attack armed white men. They were afraid of the soldiers; and really, I think the feeling was reciprocal. It is true that the night before I arrived here a Canaque threw a spear, to which some burning grass was attached, into the bark roof of the building inhabited by the convicts, twenty paces from the stockade, and then dived into the bush unharmed by the shots of the sentries. It is true that, the morning before, the bake-house at the old convict camp, 500 yards from where I was installed, was first plundered of the loaves destined for the daily consumption, and then fired. But these were individual cases of bravado; and, in the latter case, there were no soldiers nearer than the stockade. It seemed strange, however, that the bake-house and provender should have been nightly left at the mercy of the enemy. A new oven had, however, been built within the line of sentries.

Lieutenant Frappier of the *Tage* was another of my new acquaintances, whose lively Parisian sallies tended to enliven the mess-table. Monsieur Duval, the commissaire, had about the hardest time of any of us, whilst the easiest billet was that of the telegraph clerk, whose office was in the log building formerly used as a prison. The line to the north being still cut, there was only communication with Noumea, and only government messages at that, which were not very numerous. Our dinner on these, as on following occasions, was not a very meagre one. There was soup, and beef in two or three different fashions, and vegetables, and a salad; and good bread and *vin ordinaire* always made up for other deficiencies. True, we had our hardships. Tablecloth and napkins there were none, and knives were scarce; lucky for me that I had bought a good *couteau-de-chasse*. After

dinner there was, of course, coffee and tobacco and general conversation. Then I found out that every one present was intimately acquainted with the manners, habits, and customs of *les Canaques*. Young officers a few months in the colony—the telegraph clerk even—all gave their ideas freely for the benefit of Colonel Wendling and myself. *Les Canaques* did this or did that; they were likely to do this thing, or would avoid doing that thing. The amount of information possessed about the natives was something wonderful. I could write a book on half I heard. Where did these young men get all their knowledge from? Then I remembered the story of the camel. My friends had seen a Canaque—several, no doubt; so they were more entitled to speak of them with authority than the Frenchman who wrote an elaborate treatise on the camel after paying a visit to the Jardin des Plantes.

Every five minutes the cry of the sentries was heard—*Bon quart partout!* the sailors' watchword, the camp having been first occupied by the men of the *Tage*. The fifteen sentries around the stockade gave this cry with a variety of different pronunciations. Some lingered long and carefully on the words, as if conscious of performing a solemn duty; others, sharp and curtly—these latter Parisians, no doubt. After an hour's digestive chat, I had a walk with Doctor Lassouarn outside the stockade. The tired soldiers were sleeping under their mia-mias. In front was a large fire, kept up all night by some convicts detailed off for that purpose. This was supposed to afford light in the event of a rush of the natives, and to enable the troops to distinguish friend from foe. But to my mind it would have also served admirably to show the Canaques their victims. A few determined men could have made a rush through the camp, burnt and killed, and disappeared in the bush again without hindrance. That the soldiers were not harassed by night attacks proved to me that the natives had no knowledge even of savage warfare, and were afraid of the military. True, I was told that the Canaques dreaded travelling at night on account of the evil spirits haunting the shades; and also that the cold affected them. Still, they must have overcome this repugnance when they fired the bakehouse a few nights previously.

I slept the sleep of the just journalist until the reveille aroused me. Turning out, I drank a cup of coffee and munched

a crust in company with Colonel Wendling. Said he, "We go for a little promenade before breakfast; will you come?" I was pleased to be on the war-path at once. In the large open space in front of the stockade the expedition was formed—thirty soldiers, and twelve convicts armed with axes. Two Arabs rode in front as scouts. We set off at a quick pace at six o'clock. Down the road, past the old convict camp where over thirty men were killed, past the celebrated bakery, between gardens still flourishing with vegetables, over a small stream—we marched so fast, and the conversation of Captain De Joux was so lively, that one had little time to examine the surroundings. Turning into a track from the main road, at about a mile from the camp, we came to the ruined house of a settler. There was a gate here, and wire fence round the paddock. "Convicts to the front," shouted the colonel; and with their axes they soon destroyed the barriers for many yards on each side of the road. The wood was piled up and burnt. This Colonel Wendling said was to facilitate operations both for cavalry and infantry in pursuing the Canaques. Whilst this was going on I strolled to the front, and in company with the lieutenant, discovered the remains of a still warm fire in an old cattle-pen. A native axe was found hard by; one or more natives had evidently camped there the preceding night. It was not pleasant to think that in the scrub around lurking savages might be taking a pot-shot or poising their spears at one. Forward once more, and soon, under the guidance of Captain De Joux, we dived into the bush. The convicts were ordered to cut down all the young trees and saplings as we passed—a military road was being made. We came to other fences, which were all treated in like manner, many yards being destroyed and burnt. What between the Canaques and the troops, the colonists, when they returned to their stations, would find that they had considerable repairs to make.

In time, we left the paddocks and pursued our course through the bush. Every obstructing shrub was cut down. I marched at the head of the column with Colonel Wendling. The grass was waist high, and damp with the night dew; one was soon wet to the skin. Between the trees were immense cobwebs appertaining to gigantic spiders which flopped unpleasantly in one's face. It was not exactly a nice morning walk before breakfast. We passed old native plantations which had been

destroyed by previous troops. Now and then a clump of bushes, which might afford shelter for an ambuscade, was cut down, and set fire to. Arrived at a small stream, one of the soldiers said, "*V'là mon colonel, un drapeau blanc.*" Above us, in a tall tree, a white rag was seen almost hidden from our view, but perceptible from the high hills which we were fast approaching. A dozen axes soon brought the signal to earth. It was a common piece of linen attached to a long cane, which I thought had not been there long. Perhaps it had been elevated by the scout whose camp we had passed, and was intended to warn his comrades that the whites were approaching. In the hills around we saw many fires. We marched on quickly, passed more plantations, and arrived at the spurs at the foot of Ouitchambo. By a native path the Arabs led their horses up one of these, and on the almost level summit rode along, their figures showing out wild and fierce against the sky. But Colonel Wendling did not take his men up the comparatively easy paths. There was a steep bluff before us, up which we had to climb, clutching the grass to aid our ascent. At the top of this there was still another and steeper bluff. Around this a path ran, along which some soldiers and convicts were despatched. I, thinking it would be an easier way, followed them. It led to a cocoanut plantation on the banks of a mountain stream. Here there had been some Canaque huts which had been previously burnt by the troops. The axe was laid to the half-dozen trees, and they soon fell. Everywhere fire and destruction had been applied to the native villages and plantations within easy distance of Bouloupari. It was the Canaque system of warfare, which it was supposed they would feel most.

Some of the soldiers made spoil of long rolls of the white pith of the cocoanut palm. This was cut from the heart at the top of the trees. Said Colonel Wendling, "You have thirst, take!" One broke or cut a piece of this, or peeled off a shred of another kind. It tasted like the nut itself, although without the milkiness. I found it very refreshing, and, invigorated, started ahead on the route homewards. To the soldier, the last camp is always home. For a time we followed the same track, but then Colonel Wendling consulted his compass, and after conferring with Captain De Joux, we made, according to their calculations, a bee-line for Bouloupari and breakfast. The sun

had dried the grass, and the niaouli trees gave little shade. The return march was twice as fatiguing as the outward one. But stumbling and tripping over fallen trees and through holes, I kept pace with the troops, aided occasionally by the friendly arm of one of my convicts. It is astonishing what training will do. I now, full of years and lazy withal, think it exertion to walk down George Street. But, side by side with the soldiers, the old habit of keeping pace with them, of never losing a step, revived; and I struggled on; whereas, if I had been by myself, I do not think all the Canaques under heaven would have stopped me from lying down and going to sleep. But the trained soldier, even when dead beat, has the same feeling as the oarsman in a boat-race. Every thought is concentrated on keeping time like a machine, and it is wonderful how machine-like we may make our bodies.

Still, the toiling up Ouitchambo had considerably fatigued me, and I was thankful for the help of my convict. By the time we struck the road from Buraki to Bouloupari the soldiers were pretty well exhausted, and I was able to take my place at the head of the column. When we neared the stream the sight of water raised my thirst to an almost unconquerable pitch. I rushed into it to take a drink. "No! no!" cried the Colonel, "it is not good: wait a little." "One drink," said I, stooping down. But at a sign from their commander two soldiers seized me, and I was dragged away. I recognised the kindness of this friendly use of force. We arrived at the stockade, troops were paraded and dismissed. We found that breakfast was nearly finished. It was a quarter to twelve. We had been absent nearly six hours, and walked eighteen miles. A very fair morning's promenade, although the result, the destruction of a few cocoanut trees, did not seem of much account. I drank deep draughts of good red wine and water, but was too tired to eat anything until after I had secured Nature's restorer—a sleep for some hours.

The second day after my arrival we took another little walk before breakfast round the other side of Pic Ouitchambo. More cocoanut trees were cut down, but no natives, nor any trace of them, were discovered. For a week the same operations were carried on. But on the 3rd the troops were under fire. I was not with them, for these morning marches with no result

did not please me. On foot the fatigue was too great, and I could not obtain a horse. On this occasion there was a halt on one of the spurs of Ouitchambo; and the officers were sitting down, when one shot was discharged at them from a distance. A volley was fired by the soldiers, a few natives were seen running away, and then the troops marched back. When I met them on their return, Lieutenant Frappier told me that he thought one man was hit by the way he ran. In half-an-hour the story enlarged to one Canaque certainly wounded; at the dinner-table at night, it was asserted that one was killed. It was the old tale of the "three crows" over again. This lack of events was distressing to a newspaper correspondent, and the next day I intended starting for Uarail, the northern limit of the revolt. Colonel Wendling had kindly promised me great events in a few days, but I could not wait for these. I was informed by the officers that the result of the reconnaissance during the last days was that they had discovered it was easier to attack the Pic Ouitchambo from the other side. Any stockman could have told them that, and after my first day's experience I was prepared to vouch that it could not be more difficult. The spur of the mountain on which I nearly gave up the ghost was called after me. One acquires notoriety by various means.

But if a grand attack were made on Ouitchambo, I very much doubted if the rebels would be found there. All the day and night we saw the smoke of their fires in the surrounding mountains. They were there in numbers, but were they going to stop there to be killed, or would they make a stand, and fight as the Maories did in New Zealand? Viewing the country, I considered it almost an impossibility for soldiers to pursue and capture the natives over rocks and hills, and through the scrub. The soldiers, encumbered with clothes and accoutrements, could not travel like the Canaque. Our young conscripts, too, good enough on parade, were now doing work to which they were totally unaccustomed and were quite unfitted. In saying this I do not wish for one moment to reflect on their courage, but the fact is, this war of repression on the Canaques had to be made *à la Canaque*. Colonel Wendling appreciated this to a certain extent, and native manners had been adopted in the burning of villages and *tabus*, and the destruction of cocoanut trees and vegetation.

An attempt had been made to burn the forests; considering the tropical vegetation, naturally with no result. But vandalism is not altogether war. To march out day after day a distance of twelve to twenty miles to cut down a cocoanut tree and then return—this surely could not much impress the Canaques with the prowess or ability of the French soldiers. Colonel Wendling and the officers were all good fellows and gentlemen; I was treated by them with kindness and consideration; but I am forced to record that they did not properly understand the occasion at that time. After a while they and the troops might prove equal to the guerilla warfare of the Canaques, but at first it annoyed me greatly to see, day after day, the soldiers march back to a fortified camp, and to realise that six weeks after the outbreak affairs were no more advanced than directly after that sad event.

The fault was, that Colonel Wendling and his officers wished to do everything themselves, and to gain the credit to themselves. There was not a single man who knew the country, to give proper information to the commander-in-chief. It is true, there was a small troop of mounted volunteers, composed of stockmen and settlers; but these had not been properly utilised or treated. The fault was in their organisation. Monsieur Morissot, their commander, was an old naval officer. The fitness of things is rather outraged when a sailor assumes a cavalry command, and this might account for the fact that he had done nothing. Captain Morissot had three times been to Bouloupari from Noumea, and had carefully gone back again. The volunteers, a few of whom were English, were here now under the command of Lieutenant Saxton. This gentleman was the nephew of Dr. Saxton, physician and banker, of Market Drayton. He formerly had a station in New Zealand, but was then manager for the various properties throughout the island belonging to Monsieur Pelletier, the Mayor of Noumea. Saxton, tall, slight, and supple, was the beau ideal of a horseman. He was calm and cool, with true English *sang froid.* "All friends round the Wrekin" to whom the family name is known will be pleased, although not astonished, to hear that the Shropshire man proved himself worthy of his breeding. In the only fight with the natives in the vicinity, Saxton protected the rear guard with a few of his men. Captain de la Follye de

Joux, the soldier of Burgundy, jester and fighter of the "first force," in the conversation of the mess-table bore testimony to Mr. Saxton's services, and when he arrived in camp all the officers welcomed him as a brave comrade. But Lieutenant Saxton would never sit down at our mess. "I am a volunteer, like my men," said he to me, "and I must stick to them." Amongst the volunteers there were some Australian stockmen and French settlers who knew the country. Fricottee, he whose wife and children were killed, was there. But Colonel Wendling did not seem to know how to utilise these men. They had been, to use the words of one of them, "humbugged about." They had a great grievance in that some of their horses were taken to mount the Arabs, eight of whom were at this time in camp. Now there is a tradition amongst the French that an Arab is the first horseman in the world, a man of war to be feared by all. There are Arabs and Arabs; and I think a great many are first-class frauds. I am much of the same opinion as Mark Twain respecting these children of the desert. Those present were certainly not of much use; they soon killed their horses in the bush, not being used to such work, and I did not think much of their courage. Compared to an Australian stockman, they cannot ride. Yet Colonel Wendling and all the officers had a great fancy for these Arabs, and they were taken out as mounted guards, with the daily "excursions." They had a mess of their own, and, in defiance of the Koran, devoted themselves to drinking rum on their return. They were also distinguished as "looters," and the deserted houses of the colonists around, which had escaped the Canaques, had been pillaged by the Arabs. They were like "Hans Breitmann," in that they "left nothing behind."

If there were no startling events, I at least had, during many days, a study of French camp life. One night I really thought something was about to happen. We sat at dinner. Our dinners were always pretty good; Dr. Lossouarn being *chef de gamelle*, and, in default of medical practice, devoting his massive brain power to varying the *menu*. This was rather monotonous. There was too much beef. We had many dishes, but all of the flesh of the ox. However, with a salad, and good red wine and bread, one can always dine; and we enjoyed ourselves, and laughed and chaffed, and recked little of Atai, the rebel, hiding in

the recesses of Ouitchambo. French people will keep up a play of wit and of words for an hour on the most trivial subject. We had not many themes, but made the most of them. For example, in the lack of female society, we worshipped a portrait, that of a charming lady, wife of a colonist near Bouloupari, who fled in time from the natives. The carte, with divers other things, was found in her house. Lieutenant Rochelle took possession of it, and daily, after dinner, handed it round for inspection. Then it was placed on a little altar formed of salt-cellars, and with the candles around, looked quite imposing; but it was rather cruel of Captain De Joux to put the long black curls belonging to the lady, and left behind in her flight, on the top of the great *tabu* captured by him. A *tabu* is a carved pole adorned with shells and feathers, which, like a standard of old, is erected in the village of a chief to protect it from intrusion: at least, it warns away outsiders. Some of these *tabus* are works of primitive art; I have seen one with the entire figure of a French officer, a good likeness, carved thereon. Other are rude blocks. Certain shells are considered valuable, and *tabus* are generally adorned with these. *Bien!* on this night we were amusing ourselves with admiring the portrait of Madame ——, when suddenly there was the report of a chassepot!

The commandant arose; we all looked at each other. Then another and another report. We all got up, Colonel Wendling the last, calmly finishing his glass of kirschwasser before he left. I thought, "Now there is an event. I have been good lately, and Providence is kind to me. A night attack; not too much of an attack, but just a few killed. What a treat!" You see, I looked at it from a journalistic point of view. I came to New Caledonia to see fights and such things, and I had been disappointed as yet. Dr. Lossouarn, M. Duval, and the telegraph clerk rushed for their revolvers. These weapons were the bane of their lives. None of us would walk a yard outside the stockade without being armed, and the civilians, not accustomed to carry arms, were greatly worried thereby. They would hang them up on a tree or post, and, forgetting them for a time, would come back to fetch them, greatly exercised in their minds at their temporary defenceless state. We, at Bouloupari, had great respect for the lurking Canaque, who was supposed to be always with us. So, seizing our pistols, we went different ways. I took

the path to the perch of the sentry in the garden, and climbing the ladder saw a small fire, which seemed about two hundred yards off. I hardly fancied that the attacking Canaque would let us know his whereabouts by kindling a fire; but on this a chassepot volley was being directed. I went to the back of the stockade, on the side facing the light, and found all the officers gathered there. A guard was sent out to investigate the mystery, and the men advanced, firing rapidly. They were only absent a few minutes; the fire was quenched, and on their return we found that it had been caused by the smouldering embers left by some workmen during the day. But the instructions to the sentries were to fire on any light or moving thing seen outside the line after sundown, and this instance showed that they would fulfil their orders. Our fears all quieted, we returned to our coffee, and the cry, *Bon quart partout!* was heard all around once more.

During the marches which we made round the Pic Ouitchambo, the stronghold of the rebels, the convicts were utilised in clearing paths along which our light horse, principally composed of Australian stockmen, could act. But they knew their power, and that their assistance was needed. The extra rations and the rum served out to them counted for much, and reconciled them to the chance of being speared by the Canaques. I shall never forget one August morning lying on the slope of a hill in company with two convicts. The blazing sun shone over the fertile plain of St. Vincent, and was reflected in the distant sea. The column ahead was climbing up the mountain's side. On a spur of the hill two Arab horsemen, motionless as statues, were silhouetted against the sky. They were scouts whose presumed abnormal powers of vision would detect any attempt to lay an ambuscade for us during our return march. I was satisfied that there was not a Canaque within sixteen miles, and that this march was merely undertaken by Colonel Wendling to disgust me with the whole proceedings, and induce me to return to Noumea. I quite understood that it must have been very unpleasant to Colonel Wendling to have a journalist drop down in his camp, armed with the governor's order to go everywhere and see everything. Under the circumstances, I wonder at the kindness and courtesy extended to me by him and all the French officers. But Colonel Wendling kept me at Bouloupari by detaining my

telegraph despatches. Communication had been restored with Noumea and all round the coast, although across the island the wires were still kept cut by the rebels. I had a trusty agent in Noumea to whom I sent telegrams, to be forwarded by the mail steamer to the *Sydney Morning Herald*. Messages were also sent to me from Noumea. All these were stopped by some one in authority. At Bouloupari I little thought that the innocent-looking fat telegraph operator, who was so polite to me when I sat smoking in his office anxiously inquiring for messages from Noumea or Canala, was in a conspiracy which caused me a great loss of time, and, if possible, reputation. For when the Chevalier Hanckar, a gentleman well known in Australia, and partner of Mr. Higginson in the nickel mines on the East coast, wired me twice from Canala, "Come early as possible, Servan wishes you to join him on his next expedition; you will see some good fighting," neither of the messages was delivered to me. So M. Hanckar's francs and courtesy were wasted. Colonel Wendling did not wish me to join his rival in the field! But he wanted to get rid of me from Bouloupari; and would parade before daylight, and start a column on forced marches of many miles up and down hill, the result being exactly the same as that attained by the French king of nursery legend. The dear colonel wished to break my heart or my wind. Looking back, the only consolation I have is that our commandant was a stout and heavy man, and that he himself suffered considerably. I bear him no ill-will, but I certainly despise that greasy little telegraph official, whose conduct at Bouloupari perhaps recommended him for the post of superintendent, which I found he occupied on my last visit to New Caledonia.

But on this morning I had begun to recognise the tactics of *mon colonel*. There was nothing to be gained by walking up the hill, which looked something like the side of a house, before us. The signals of the enemy were visible all around, pillars of fire by night, of smoke by day. The Canaques had a method of communicating with each other by putting, at intervals, earth and grass in the fires, when the smoke would spring up in a series of puffs like those from a pipe. They had a well-defined code, and so kept up a connection for many miles. I have been told that some Australian blacks have also this system of signalling. But the troops were marching right away from any

native camps or villages. The only possible outcome of this expedition was that they might cut down a few cocoanut trees *en route*, and that I might be "foundered." So I declared my intention of not moving a step further, and lay down on the dry grass. The colonel looked at me savagely; he had given the order to mount the ascent, and so was obliged to puff and pant ahead, whilst I took my ease. A smart, active, good-humoured villain was one of my convict companions, the very type of Victor Hugo's *Montparnasse* in *Les Misérables*. His companion was an older man, a *Thenardier*. I gave them cigars, and the young one talked of his crimes. I have found all over the world that convicts are more apt to boast of their offences than to extenuate them. They were both murderers, "lifers." Montparnasse chopped the grass with his axe in a vicious manner, which made me almost unconsciously loosen my revolver. "Are you afraid of us, monsieur, like those people there?" he asked. "No; but you irritate me. Sit down. Why do you think that any one is afraid of you?" "It is true! All the soldiers and all the officers are frightened out of their lives of the Canaques, and of *us*. The governor has to send soldiers to shoot the Canaques—but they have to get our help. At every *pénitencier* we are armed and drilled. But that the natives would come down and kill us, we would have an insurrection of our own. We could take Teremba, Bourail, Pam, Canala, perhaps Noumea." "But more troops would come out from France; you could not fight an army. What would you do then?" I asked. "We would take ships and land in Australia. Many of us have escaped there. Perhaps we may try it some day. Eh, Jules?"

The camp woke at five to half-past in the morning, when the *reveille* sounded, and we all turned out. There was considerable difficulty in the matter of ablutions, but your Frenchman can do with very little of that sort of thing. I was lucky in sharing with Dr. Lossouarn a large washing-basin looted from the house of the belle of Bouloupari, the lady whose portrait we worshipped after dinner. It was impossible to bathe in the creek, as the water, although limpid and clear, was far too shallow. But on one day there was a flood. It had rained for nearly twenty-four hours, and we had a particularly wretched time of it. Our mess-table was not lively that night. Old sacks and matting protected our shed on the weather side,

but rain and wind beat in, and our lamps were blown out, and everything was moist and uncomfortable. We made a speedy retreat, and I sheltered for a time in the den which served Dr. Lossouarn as surgery and chamber. Afterwards I camped in the verandah, and, under my blankets and mackintosh, slept heedless of the rain which fell upon me. But, spite of the discomfort, the officers rejoiced at this weather. "*Voilà!*" said they, "this wet and cold is very bad for the Canaques; it makes them ill, '*comme ça,*'" and they coughed, and laughed at the thought that the rebels were catching bad colds. I cannot say that I appreciated these rejoicings at the sufferings of our enemy by tussis and phthisis. But the next morning the river was full and overflowing its banks, being many feet deep in some places. There was an animated scene at the ford. Soldiers and sailors were washing their clothes, beating them on boards, in the savage manner of the French *blanchisseuse*. Some were in the stream astride of logs, with which it was blocked. They chatted and laughed and sang. The rain had done good in providing the materials for cleanliness and consequent good humour. I thought of taking a bath, but the muddy colour of the water prevented me. I imagined that on the morrow it would be clearer; but alas! then it had returned to its old depth of a few inches, the fall being as sudden as the rise.

The rain had revived surrounding nature: the hills looked lovely with their different shades of green. The white foam of many a stream could be seen on the mountain's side. I took a walk by the side of the creek with my friend the Breton lieutenant. Its wooded banks were glorious with trees and shrubs; but this would soon pass away, for they were all being destroyed. There would be no cover for the Canaques in future. We forced our path through the trees, and watched the whirling waters. Then I thrust my arm into the stream, and brought up a handful of mud, which, after carefully washing, I deluded myself into the belief contained the "colour of gold." "*Après*" my Breton heard the note of a dove, and we tried to find its nest. Tired with this we sat on the bank, with the rapids swirling at our feet, and above us a canopy of foliage, lianas matting this together into a perfect Gothic arch over the stream. Beams of the morning sun gave light and colour and shade to

this paradise, and defined the delicate tracing of Nature's fret-work which hung above us. And my handsome companion, who was a boy as yet, told me tales of Bretagne, and of woodcraft in the *bocage* of La Vendée, till the influence of the scene stole upon us, and we lay silently listening to the music of the waters; and our thoughts were far away of loved ones across the sea, until certain prosaic pangs reminded us that the break fast hour was past.

The ordinary round of camp life amongst the soldiers consisted in dressing, making fires, and warming coffee. Those who were going out on a cocoanut-destruction excursion had to parade before six, when they marched off, to march back again in four or five hours' time. Those left behind cleaned their arms and accoutrements, and a parade and inspection took place before breakfast. This latter was very necessary, as the delicate machinery of the chassepot required to be always kept in order. After that, the soldiers had nothing to do but relieve guard, and devote themselves to preparing their meals. The Crimea taught the world that in adaptability to circumstances the French troops were far superior to the British. The former make themselves at home everywhere, and will get a good meal anywhere, and almost out of everything. Here they had fair rations of fresh meat, bread, coffee, and wine, with a small glass of tafia (rum) per diem. Divided into messes, one was appointed chief cook, but was generally assisted by all hands. There were small fires all around the stockade, and on these pots were simmering, tended with the loving care which none but a Frenchman bestows on the preparation of his meals. Breakfast and dinner with us were sacred things. One soldier would carefully keep the fire at a certain height, feeding it with small sticks; another would stir the soup; another cut bread or vegetables. All were employed, and happy.

When the consummation of all this trouble came, the men gathered around improvised tables, made out of old cases, and ate, drank, and were as merry in their way as we at the officers' mess. One section had erected quite an eligible *salle-à-manger* with table and benches, and covering of boughs overhead. After breakfast they lay down under their mia-mias, and took the siesta which is so welcome in this climate, or with needle and thread repaired the injuries to their garments. Or, in chorus, they

sang *chansons* familiar to the French army all over the world. There was the "Song of the Gendarme," with its amusing refrain of "Brigadier! Brigadier!" or a song describing the peculiarities of all the officers, from the corporal to the commandant. With all the roughness of life, there was an absence of that grossness and coarseness which you would find among English soldiers. There is something in the Latin race which is wanting in the Teutonic, *esprit*, *chic*, taste—call it what you will, it is a quality which softens down and improves the hardest-grained nature. Many soldiers played with their animal pets. Every squad had one—dogs, cats, or young goats—each recognising its proper owners and protectors, who fed and petted it. There were some pretty Maltese puppies found in a deserted house near here. There was a cat which had been brought from Noumea on the knapsack of a soldier. There were other dogs of all sorts and sizes, the camp being full of these refugees from the surrounding stations. Their owners killed or fled, they took shelter with and attached themselves to other men. One dog belonging to a dead gendarme lay always by the *salle-à-manger*, hard by the spot where his master's blood was sprinkled on the lintels. There was another one which watched three days by the body of Madame Fricottee, until it was found and interred. Another received a ration, a kilo of bread daily, for services rendered to the army, in that when the first detachment came here, and provisions were short, he swam out to sea, and captured a bullock. I am afraid your Anglo-Saxon would never officially reward a faithful animal in that manner. There were two poor wounded dogs—one with a broken leg, and the other with a flesh wound, made by a Canaque's tomahawk. These were tended by, and received the sympathy of, the convicts. I was soon on terms of great intimacy with most of the animals in camp—Mustache, Pietri, Tombo, Wallace, Fritz, Friquette, and others. Friquette, I think, was the smallest dog I had ever seen. She was not as large as an ordinary cat, and with her little head and pleading eyes reminded me of some women who are always demanding one's sympathy and support on account of their fragile nature, but who could dance down the strongest of us. Friquette all day long luxuriated in the sun and took no notice of the fleas which swarmed around. But when the hour of night and of dinner arrived, there she was quietly nestling against me and

rubbing her nose into my hand in a feminine manner, which of course obtained its reward.

The soldier's life in camp, then, was not a hard one. He had a day's rest after every excursion, in which the only toil was to relieve guard, clean accoutrements, prepare meals, and stroll around the country, not too far though, looting what he could. The guards, too, were mostly kept by the sailors of the *Tage*, who, physically and morally, were, I think, much superior to our young conscripts. There was one marked difference between the sailors and soldiers. The former would never receive a *pour boire* or take any money for services rendered. The latter had no scruples, and always looked out for the pieces of *dix sous* which I distributed. I kept on my belt, besides my revolver, pouch, and knife, two bags, one of small silver and the other of tobacco. The first was for the soldiers, the second for the convicts. I thus made friends all around. But a sailor would never take money, although perchance he would not refuse a cigar. I loved to hear the tars gather at night round their fires and sing those mournful Breton hymns, such as might have been chanted by the followers of Jean Bart and the great Duquesne what time victory crowned the fleets of France.

After the soldiers and sailors, I had to investigate the life of the third body here—the convicts. These were paraded at six o'clock in the morning, and then sent off in gangs to their different occupations. A few were employed in menial offices in the camp; others were sent out in the bush to cut down the surrounding niaoulis; others again were making houses of adobe, or sawing wood for the new blockhouse which was shortly to be built there. Amongst the convicts they had men who did everything. There were carpenters, shoemakers, butchers, bakers, who were all at work at their respective callings. They worked from six until ten, only having what remained from their ration of biscuit or bread from the previous day. At ten they knocked off for breakfast and rested until one, from that time they worked until five. Only eight hours in all. And their "stroke" was decidedly that styled "the government." The tradesmen worked lazily, and the labourers even more so. You saw twenty men coming into the camp, hauling on a handcart a small log which two could have pulled with ease. For every work there were about five times the necessary number of convicts employed.

The hardest labour they then had was in accompanying the forced marches of Colonel Wendling, and cutting down trees and shrubs to clear the path.

I do not say that a convict here had exactly a happy life; but he certainly was not overworked; the term "with hard labour" could not be applied to his existence. His quarters, of course, were not very comfortable at that time, but fresh barracks were being built, and, taking the difference in conditions into consideration, the convict did not rough it more than the officer. The rations were fair, including fresh meat, bread, biscuit, wine, tobacco, salt, and soap. The surveillance was not strict, but then there was little chance of any of these attempting to escape, the skulls and bones of their comrades at the old camp being a sufficient warning to them. All the *surveillants* were armed with chassepot and revolver, and ran in couples, and the working parties never ventured very far into the bush or away from each other. But for fear of the Canaque, the *surveillants* would have gone to sleep and allowed the convicts to work as they pleased. Every morning before breakfast there was the doctor's parade; generally about twenty convicts, too, had foot-sores or wounds dressed. These were caused by the rough walking in the bush with old shoes, which did not protect the feet, and the sun, and flies, and dirt soon made a trifling scratch an irritating and horrible sore. I was sorry for some of these poor wretches, who had to hobble to their work with wounded feet, which must have been frightfully painful. Our soldiers and sailors were always well, and Dr. Lossouarn had no trouble with them. The convicts might be pitied by some in that they had no rest on Sundays, but laboured on that day as on the others. But then the Sabbath is not a French institution, and in war is by all nations ignored. Indeed, it seems a favourite day for the destruction of human life, many of the great battles of the world having been fought on a Sunday.

On one Sunday there had been a very short promenade in the morning, so after breakfast Colonel Wendling paraded his men for a little rifle practice. On the other side of the creek there was a large plot of cleared meadow land. Against a solitary gum tree in this a piece of "gospel oak" iron was placed, being about seven feet long, and two broad. Twenty yards away a bugler and marker crouched in the grass. The colonel, some of the

officers, and myself sat on the bank and watched the performance. The improvised target was 200 yards distant from the firing point. First, fifty sailors of the *Tage* tried their skill. They were very long in taking aim, and not quick in loading. Each man had three shots, then the bugler at our end gave the signal "cease firing," which was responded to by his comrade; and the marker ran and examined the target, and the bugler informed us of the result. This at first was very bad, the average having been only one hit in ten shots. After an hour's practice the sailors fired a volley, taking good steady aim, and waiting for the word of command. Only one shot in twenty-five struck the target. This must have been very encouraging to any Canaque who might have happened to be looking on. The average of the marines was better, one in three and one in four. One man made two out of three, and was commended by the colonel. The soldiers were allowed to assume any position they liked, either standing or kneeling. Afterwards came the Arabs, and expectation was raised, but out of six shots each there was not a hit. These sons of the desert were certainly complete frauds; they could neither ride nor shoot.

I was particularly struck with the large number of bad cartridges—quite six per cent. Then the disadvantage of the chassepot was apparent. When a cartridge misses fire it is necessary to discharge it by means of the ramrod, and not with a spring as in the Snider and other rifles. Much time is thus lost. This target practice did not at all reassure me. When at such a large object, at a short distance, one out of three was the best average after a long and careful aim, it seemed to me that the Canaques jumping about in the bush were perfectly safe. Indeed, a few days before an instance of bad marksmanship had occurred which was almost amusing. At Pieta, three natives condemned to be shot were tied to trees; one only was killed, and another slipped his cords and ran away. At Tomo, out of fifteen, only nine were killed. I may state that what these natives had been guilty of did not exactly appear, but suspicion then was sufficient to sign the death warrant of any one with a dark skin. It was this fearful suspicion, a panic of terror, which, with the want of energetic action against those who were the real authors of the outrages, tended to cause the outbreak to spread amongst those tribes which, up till then, had been friendly.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### ON THE WAR-PATH.

I WAS glad to leave Bouloupari. Personally, I liked Colonel Wendling, not being aware till long afterwards of the detention of my despatches, but I was disappointed with his inaction in the matter of fighting. He was only great in cutting down cocoa-nut trees. To me it seemed a mean and foolish thing. Moses, in Deuteronomy, enunciated the Divine Law, "When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an axe against them; for thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down (for the tree of the field is man's life) to employ them in the siege. Only the trees which thou knowest that they be not trees for meat, thou shalt destroy and cut them down." Even those who do not accept the Pentateuch in its entirety, may recognise the wisdom and goodness of this command. For weeks Colonel Wendling and his men marched up and down and around Ouitchambo, and destroyed almost every green thing, and killed a few natives—not many, I think, for after seeing the target practice, I was always dubious when told "twenty natives were supposed to be killed, but the dead were carried away by their companions." I did not hear of any women or children being captured. I am afraid the threat of extermination was, as far as possible, carried out.

I rode to Buraki and thence took a transport steamer to Teremba, some thirty miles to the north. This settlement is the *poste* of the *arrondissement* of Uarai or Ourail. The La Foa river flows into the bay. The water here is very shallow, and we had to be rowed two miles in a small boat to the landing place. The "Government house" was the most important building at Teremba, but it also boasted of a church, a store, a gaol, and barracks for convicts. These latter were on the "half time" system, cultivating small patches of land under the eye of

*surveillants* for half the day, being entitled to work for themselves on the other half. But at sundown they were required to be inside their barracks, which were guarded by sentries. At this time, when the convicts, by the massacre in the first two days of the insurrection of over one hundred of their number, were so unpleasantly reminded that they were intruders in New Caledonia, you may be sure that none ventured to be abroad at night. In the *arrondissement* of Ourail there were also many *libérés*—ticket-of-leave men—settled on the soil, and there were some free settlers at the village of Moindou, and along the valley of the La Foa river. At the little township of La Foa, where, as at Bouloupari, there was a post of gendarmes, and an hotel, the insurrection first broke out, and it was near there that Colonel Galli Passeboc was killed a few days afterwards. The loss of the *commandant militaire* considerably impressed, not to say scared, the young conscripts who formed the *personnel* of the troops in New Caledonia.

Some eight miles inland was the *pénitencier agricole* of Fonwharii, and here the Commandant Rivière made a strong post. With only a few sailors and soldiers, he had always a strong guard, as he organised and drilled a corps of *franc tireurs* from the refugees, *libérés* mostly, and armed the convicts when out on the march. These latter could not, I think, be depended on to attack, but I suppose would defend themselves; besides, the very appearance of so many armed men would impress the Canaques. Some villages were burned around La Foa, but it was generally thought that most of the natives had cleared out of the neighbourhood, and, with Atai at their head, were intrenched in the recesses of the Pic Ouitchambo. It was to attack these that Colonel Wendling took command of the troops in the field. But the Commandant Rivière and his staff kept watch and ward over the northern limit of the revolt, being prepared to act in case of disturbances spreading past that line. It was recognised that the danger lay that way, and so a trusted superior officer like the Commandant Rivière was kept in charge there, assisted by Captain Rathouis, aide-de-camp of the governor. The revolt was thus apparently circumscribed to narrow limits. Within these the natives were to be punished by all the "cultivation" being destroyed, and the burning of their villages. Every Canaque and his house and his crops were to be effaced

from the earth. "Man, woman, and child must be exterminated," was the cry of most of the gallant soldiers of France.

Cowardice is always brutal. An epidemic, like that which caused the cry "*nous sommes trahis*" during the siege, possessed the French population here. Almost every man, woman, and child in Noumea told me that a rising of all the Canaques in New Caledonia was planned for a certain date, when every white inhabitant would be massacred. A spasm of fear seized every one, to be succeeded by hysterical shrieks for vengeance. The journal *La Nouvelle Calédonie* started these in its columns, and nearly every lady in Noumea repeated them. "Kill all the wretches!" was the cry. It seemed to me that nearly every one in Noumea was mad. If the advice of many gentlemen who rushed to the governor with their ideas had been taken, the whole native population of the island would have been driven into revolt. Governor Olry had indeed a hard and trying time. He had scarcely assumed the reins of office when this outbreak occurred, and the whole responsibility was thrown upon him, with none competent to advise, although many too willing to do so. A favourite plan which was forced on the governor was to enlist a number of natives from the Loyalty Islands, land them at Canala on the east coast, march them over the mountains, and let them clear out the rebels at so much a head. The great objection to this appeared to be that once started there would be no stopping them as long as there was a native head in the country, that the Loyalties, as natural enemies of the New Caledonian Canaques, would not be satisfied with just wiping out the few rebels. Every native they met would be a rebel to them. So I think the governor was quite right in not entertaining this proposition. "Another way" was that the aboriginals from the Isle of Pines should be enlisted. The hardy shoremen there are physically stronger than those on the main island, and should make fine warriors. But I was told that the authorities were afraid to arm them and bring them over in numbers. They might take a fancy not to go back again.

When Henri Rivière, the brilliant *feuilletoniste* and romance writer, man of fashion, favourite of Parisian *salons, capitaine de vaisseau* and *commandant supérieur*, received me so kindly at the camp at the *pénitencier agricole* de Fonwharii, little could we reck of the frightful death he would afterwards meet with in

Tonquin. Monsieur Rivière was a man of fortune and advanced in years, but he loved the service of his country, for which he died. It was said he was fond of gambling—many a night I have passed at *roulette* with him, but the stakes were but trifling. It was his pride that none of his officers owed money; they might lose thousands of francs at the *Cercle* over night, Rivière would see that the debts were paid in the morning. I remember a trifling incident which showed the man. The last time I saw him was one morning when I left Fonwharii for Teremba, and thence for Noumea. We strolled in the garden together arm-in-arm, I listening with attention to the brilliant flashes of wit from one who was my superior in the profession of letters. Suddenly the commandant said, "Have you any paper like this?" showing me some *bons* signed by the officers for trifling sums at play. Unthinkingly, I put my hand in my pocket. He took the crumpled pieces of paper, cast a glance over them and tore them up, handing me the few francs they represented. In spite of my protests I was forced to take the money.

The *pénitencier agricole* at Fonwharii was, until the war broke out, considered a very important establishment. It extended over an area of many square miles, including the valley recently annexed from Atai, at the instigation of the late *directeur*, M. Lecarte. It takes its name from the stream which runs through the grounds. Scattered all about within the limits of the *pénitencier* were the concessions of a number of *libérés*. These had now all been abandoned, and the late occupants were sheltered with us or at Teremba. Many convicts cultivated the farm here and at a branch establishment at Tia, some eight miles distant. Maize, tobacco, beans, and sugar were the principal products. Now all this industry was stopped. The fear of the Canaque had prevented the cultivation of the fields, which lay in isolated spots wherever there was a patch of good ground. The crops had been taken to feed the soldiers, the convicts had been utilised for military work. "We are in war," as I so often heard, and the aforetime peaceful *pénitencier* presented a far different appearance from what it had done a few months before. The surrounding stockade, the platforms for the sentries, the stumps of trees, groves of which had been cut down to leave a clear space for military operations in event of an attack, the musket

holes in doors and shutters, all of which were now iron-lined—these evidenced an abnormal state of affairs. Still, Fonwharii was a pleasant camp. In the gardens, which would delight the soul of a botanist, there were specimens of plants from nearly all parts of the globe, experiments in acclimatization being carried on there. Young cocoanut trees fringed the walks, and there were beds of gorgeous flowers to delight the eye. The garden included seven small sandal-wood trees, which the late *directeur* magnified in his report to 30,000. He was, however, dismissed, and the present administrator appointed.

M. Hayes was a Virginian by descent, and as such was specially polite to me. He was an agricultural engineer, much thought of by the department in France. There a scientific farmer has to learn surveying, botany, and chemistry—the cultivation of the soil being considered, what it really is, a fine art. The new *directeur* of the *pénitencier* had not a very nice time of it. He had scarcely taken charge when the insurrection broke out, and all the outside work was suspended. In the shops a certain amount of business was still being done. The carpenters and blacksmiths were busy. In the distillery, cordials and essences of fragrant woods were being made. Tobacco and cigars were yet manufactured. The "weed" was then rather rank, but I think a proper system of cultivation would make New Caledonia a good tobacco producing country. Upset as all the arrangements then were, it was impossible to obtain any true record or ascertain the cost of the establishment as against the receipts. I am afraid, however, that nowhere in New Caledonia has convict labour been made to pay. At least, a net cash profit cannot be shown. Roads and other government works have absorbed a large amount of this labour, and a considerable amount is credited for that. During my visit there were at Fonwharii 150 convicts, 130 soldiers and sailors, and a number of *libérés*, who, being armed, formed a corps of *franc tireurs*. These, with the *surveillants* and their families, and other officials, formed quite a camp. There were three stockades, one surrounding the house of the *directeur*, head-quarters of the commandant, the next around the barracks of the soldiers and convicts, and the last round the garden and paddocks. The defences were admirable, and should they be stormed one after the other, the house would stand siege for a long time with its shot-proof

doors and iron roof. The front of the house was still beautiful. There were fountains, and aviaries, and fruit trees and flowers. In the second stockade there was the same order. The convicts there were good-conduct men from Ile Nou, and although I do not think they worked too hard, still everything was done neatly, and with a system. The soldiers, perhaps, were the most slovenly, the church, which served them as a barracks, being the most untidy part of the camp.

We rose at daybreak, and partook of a cup of coffee and a crust, and then went in search of the enemy. Our column was a large one. In front marched thirty convicts, armed with the old muzzle-loading rifle; next, ten *franc tireurs* who had a semi-sort of uniform, and who were commanded by a sergeant; then thirty soldiers with a *sous lieutenant* in charge, then fifty more convicts in charge of three bullock drays. These men had large scythes, resembling the Mexican "machete," with which they were going to cut down green maize for fodder, and which would prove excellent weapons of defence. At the head of the column galloped M. Neigre, a government surveyor, who acted as guide and scout. After him came Lieutenant Maréchal, a sailor, but as his name should imply, a very good horseman. He was in command of the expedition. Captain Rathouis and myself were merely volunteers.

It was a lovely Sabbath morning, and as we ascended the hill above Fonwharii, and saw far away the white houses of Teremba, with the sea glittering in the background, I felt too good for the work on which I was bound. Shortly we passed a cocoanut grove which marked the site of one of Atai's burnt villages, destroyed, before the troubles began, on some frivolous pretext. Then the valley of Fokola opened out on the right—as fair a sight as man could see; no wonder the natives were loth to part with it. Again through impenetrable jungle on each side of the road, glorious with interlacing flowers, exhaling almost a sickening fragrance evolved by the night-dew. The track was a very good one, but every now and then we had to halt to repair the bridges which the natives had destroyed. At last we arrived at the branch farm of Tia—the buildings were all burnt by the natives on the first outbreak, and since then it had been entirely abandoned. The houses of the *surveillants* were situated on an elevated plateau, easily defended, and whence a

view was had of all the surrounding country. In the distance was the Chaîne Centrale, and I recognised the Pic Ouitchambo far to the south. The convicts were at once set to work cutting the maize which was in the fields around. Sentries were posted all about, and then twenty soldiers, ten convicts, and Messrs. Maréchal, Rathouis, and myself dashed into the bush, and at a double followed a native track. The path under foot was good, well beaten as with constant traffic, but the "hog-grass" formed a jungle higher than our heads, and we had to force our way through this. Lieutenant Maréchal had given his orders, and not a word was spoken. Anon we came to open forest and flitted silently through the trees, and skirted quiet silent lagoons which might be the home of the water fairy. Again the jungle, then a stream spanned by a single log, to cross which was a trial of nerve; more jungle, and we emerged on the bank of a broad swift-running river.

Not a minute's hesitation, or our human prey might escape. Down the banks, one after the other, we took the water, which was more than waist high, and waded to the other side, holding our arms and ammunition above our heads. Looking back, the sight impressed me. The rippling river, with the play of light and shade on its bosom, the overhanging trees and impassable jungle, save at the point we entered, the soldiers battling against the current—one glance photographed it on my mind. Another quarter of a mile and we again came to the La Foa, which here had formed a considerable island. On the bank we found the remains of a warm fire and of food. The scent was growing warm. Across this we entered groves of bananas, and, in Indian file, ran along at a smart pace. Each man's finger was on the trigger. I was fifth man up, Lieutenant Maréchal leading. Through acres of cultivation at last we emerged on an open space surrounding the village of Tia. There were no Canaque yells, no hurtling spears; the game had flown. Tia was a fine village once. A previous attack had been made upon this, and part of it was burned, the rest being left standing and the crops untouched to lure the natives back again. We found traces of a hasty flight, but this time everything was to be destroyed. Sentries being posted, we looted around. Iron pots bought from the white man, and matting, and fishing nets, and clubs and spears fell to our lot. Standing under a great banyan tree

in the centre of the village, from which hundreds of branches struck down to the earth, I surveyed the senseless work going on, and felt mean that I was connected with it. With their machetes the convicts were set to work, and acres of banana trees were destroyed. One cut was sufficient. Yams of many pounds weight were dug up and chopped to pieces with spade and axe, and then all mixed with the dirt, that they might not be used for food. But the violet-skinned tubercle, which is considered to be the special luxury of the chiefs, we reserved for ourselves. The soldiers and convicts cut down sugar-canes, and M. Rathouis, the botanist and gastronomist, had the young shoots of the taro plant selected with care. These I was told are equal to asparagus.

This was the first Canaque village I had seen, and I was surprised and astonished at the excellence of the cultivation. Trenching and ridging were carried out as well as in the most civilised community. The banana, the yam, and the taro were raised in quantities, and in a manner which could not be surpassed by Europeans. And all this food was being recklessly destroyed. At last desolation enough was caused; we set fire to everything which would burn, and marched back triumphantly, with the iron pots, slung on poles, full of yams, every soldier and convict bearing some spoil—taro, sweet potatoes, or sugar-cane. I was carried across the rivers by a stalwart ex-robber from Marseilles. Our six miles' walk, even in the shade of the bush, was quite exertion enough, and when we got back to our camp at Tia, rest and breakfast were acceptable.

## CHAPTER IX.

### LEX TALIONIS.

It was high noon under a blazing sun. We had just finished the brilliant attack on the native village near Tia, in which we proudly distinguished ourselves by destroying acres of bananas and yams. Under the shade of a cocoanut tree we reposed after our toil, and breakfasted heartily, recking little of the skulls of massacred convicts which lay around. My companions, Captain Rathouis and Lieutenant Maréchal, who had charge of the expedition, were hardy warriors, who jested at the signs of mortality. After all, it was not our fault that we did not meet the enemy. We meant fighting, and if the foe disappointed us, and we had to revenge ourselves upon the innocent vegetation, I suppose I was the only one who felt mean about it. *A la guerre, comme la guerre!* After breakfast I was asked if I would like to ride to La Foa, and see the spot where the first massacre took place. I was very willing, and we started off accompanied by a corporal's guard. There were four miles of lonely road. Every now and then we passed the burnt dwelling houses of some *concessionaire,* but the fertile crops were still standing. The Canaque was more civilised than we were, in that he never destroyed what was meant for food. Carelessly and gaily we cantered along till we came to the site of the telegraph office. Everything was in ruins. Crossing the river by the ford we rode to the spot where Colonel Galli Passeboc was killed. The dense jungle on each side of the track might have concealed a hundred foes. It was not considered safe to go farther. In the ruins of the old gendarmerie, skulls and bones were lying about. They belonged to bodies which had been destroyed by fire, after having been unburied for days, and having been partially devoured by pigs. I never wanted to eat pork in New Caledonia. At this point we had a surprise. A beautiful little filly trotted into the yard, and was immediately seized by us. For many a long day she had been haunting the neighbourhood

of her burnt stable, missing, no doubt, the companionship of her kind, and the tender care of her master. He was dead. His skull she spurned with her hoof as she pranced around; but she would be happier with her new owners than running wild in the bush. I fancied that regular daily meals, and corn and water in plenty, would make up for the loss of a freedom which might imply a considerable amount of hunger and thirst. In the gardens of the dead gendarmes some excellent salad was still growing, and our soldiers loaded themselves with this. As we returned, we halted in a cocoanut grove, and a tree was cut down to obtain milk of the young fruit. I did not approve of this wasteful destruction, especially as the liquor was to me sickly and nauseous; but I am glad to say that here the wholesale destruction of cocoanut-trees was not carried on as by the troops of Colonel Wendling. If havoc was made amongst bananas and yams and taros, the cocoanut-tree was spared for future generations. During our absence the bullock-drays had all been loaded with maize, and parties of soldiers and convicts had been foraging in the neighbourhood amongst patches of native cultivation. A *tabu* stood within a quarter of a mile of the camp of Tio. This had marked where the Canaque plantations commenced; it only served now to show our men where to look for yams. In the villages we had destroyed the principal crops, but all about in the bush, wherever there was a good piece of ground, there were small plots of cultivation. As we marched back triumphantly, the drays loaded with spoil, and almost every man carrying something edible, I could not help feeling that our Sunday morning's work was rather of an outlandish character.

*Le père* Rivière, as his officers lovingly called him—"For, see you," said they, "he commands in all, but of the rest is *bon camarade*"—was, as ever, kind to me at night; and he and M. Rathouis conferred as to what they would show me. On the morrow there was to be an ordinary expedition to make a circuit of the neighbourhood. In a day or two a blockhouse at La Foa was to be built, of which Captain Lafont would be the commander. "Will you go to Moindou, and see the chief Baptiste?" I was asked. I had great pleasure in assenting. "Afterwards you had better ride to Taremba, and assist at the court-martial on the Canaques in prison there," I was told. Again I thanked the

Commandant Rivière, and felt that I was a lucky journalist in meeting with such courtesy and consideration.

In the early morning, Captain Rathouis and myself took horse for Moindou. We had a guard of four soldiers, although my companion said it was not necessary, as everything on that side of La Foa was quiet. Baptiste, I was told, was a man of very great intelligence, a very good French scholar, and a rival of Atai's. The country through which we passed was dreary and desolate, with no vegetation but the niaouli. Moindou was the first real settlement I had seen in New Caledonia. There were stores, and a church, and the Hôtel Beaumont, and numbers of thatched cottages. The surroundings were all tropical; but the domestic life was entirely French. The barefooted children in the streets, the women chatting at the store, the men in blouses smoking and gesticulating fiercely—all reminded one of France. This was entirely a civil settlement. There were no "soldiers" here; and M. de Laubarede, the supreme authority, took the title of mayor of the commune. It was quite a peaceful village, and, looking at the calm quiet of everything, one was inclined to hope that these ex-convicts and communists, who had their "concessions" of land here, were becoming healthier, wealthier, and wiser by their return to first principles—the tilling of the soil. M. de Laubarede was, in real truth, the civil *directeur* and magistrate of this "agricultural centre." He had only a gendarme to assist him in enforcing authority; but since the outbreak of these troubles he had drilled most of the inhabitants of the village, forming a *garde nationale*, at which the officers of the camp joked very much. A rough, but strong, stockade had also been formed round the director's house, to act as a refuge in case of attack.

When we arrived, some very seedy individuals turned out of the guardhouse, and received us with military honours. "Don't laugh," said Captain Rathouis, and I remained grave as the sphinx. We found the *maire* in a state of great excitement, as an ex-convict had been murdered, *le nommé Brière*, employed by a settler some three miles from the village. Whilst M. Rathouis obtained all the particulars of the case, I listened patiently, and at last asked: "But do you know that the Canaques did this?" "It must be they; for both legs were cut off—taken to eat, no doubt." I was not so sure of this. I

remembered that this was a settlement of ex-criminals, and it seemed to me that private revenge could at that time easily satisfy itself, while the odium would be thrown on the natives. But shortly I heard something which changed my views. The day before, it appeared that a pig belonging to M. Boyer had been speared. In return, his men (ex-convicts) had fired into a party of natives, and killed a man and a woman. *Le nommé Brière's* death was evidently in revenge for this. No doubt he had rendered himself personally obnoxious to the natives. But M. Rathouis and myself said we would go and see Baptiste and inquire into these things. My companion had confidence in this chief's fidelity to the French, knowing him well—as he thought. I much wished to get the intelligent Canaque's view of the question. However, we waited for the return of a party composed of a gendarme and some of the *garde nationale,* who had been sent out to reconnoitre; and shortly they came back. The village of Baptiste was deserted! He and all his men must have joined the rebels! That is the conclusion we came to; although, in my mind, there was an idea that if this chief had meant to commence hostilities, he would have done so by killing a few more *libérés,* if not by indulging in a general massacre.

Captain Rathouis made the round of the village, and harangued the crowd at the *magasin.* The women drew near and listened, and seemed deeply impressed when their husbands were exhorted to fight for them and their children. My friend soared into the poetic regions, in depicting the happy homes and hearths which they must defend, and in telling them that it was necessary to keep good watch by night and day, and in all things to obey M. de Laubaredé. That gentleman threw in a word every now and then. Some of the women wept, and although I fancied a few of the men were sulky, the oration was a success, and we left with a promise from all to follow the instructions given them. At the end of the village, by the river, which here ran deep and strong, we found another guard-house. There was another parade and another oration. But this time the ex-communists did not want any military work. There were murmurs in the ranks. In vain M. Rathouis appealed to them. "You have your families and your concessions to defend!" One young man pointed out that, after keeping watch all night, he could not work his ground. He did not want to be sentry at

the stockade. It was all very well for soldiers; for they had their wine and tafia, and coffee and sugar. If the *garde nationale* of Moindou had the same, it would be different. The citizen soldiers were evidently on strike, and Captain Rathouis sadly came to the conclusion that it would be necessary to have a military post there.

After breakfast we drove to Teremba, and there we met the officers who had just returned from burning the mutilated body of *le nommé Brière*. I was told that it was a horrid sight. I again feasted the gubernatorial fleas in the gubernatorial bed at night, waiting for the court martial on the morrow. There did not appear to be much, if any, evidence against the prisoners. It was alleged that they knew of the outbreak and did not warn the authorities. I asked Captain Rathouis what would be done with them. He said, "They will be deported to the Isle of Pines till the trouble is over." In the morning, when some of the officers from Fouwharii were to have come over to assist at the court martial, we were disturbed by a messenger from Moindou. He reported that he had been attacked by the Canaques on the road. He said he fired twice and repulsed the natives; but the information was very vague. It caused consternation amongst us, however, and did not tend to make the judges at the *conseil de guerre* merciful. But I, who closely examined and questioned the man, believe he was lying, or grossly exaggerating through fear. He might have seen a few natives; but that was all. However, this attack on the *courier* was gravely recorded by M. Varnauld in the archives of the *arrondissement*. Mounted couriers were galloping between Teremba and La Foa all the morning, and at noon there came an order from the Commandant Rivière which distressed me. It ordained an act illogical, unjust, and useless in its results. The killing of Boyer's pigs was a bad thing for *le nommé Brière, libéré*, but it was equally bad for five Canaque prisoners in the calaboose. They were to be taken to the spot where the ex-convict was killed, to be there shot, and their bodies burnt as a warning to their friends. It was really hard on these poor wretches that, after being locked up for a month, they should be punished like this without even a form of trial. Reprisals are sometimes justifiable; but in this instance I think not. Besides, what were we going to do when the next *libéré*

was killed? The supply of Canaque prisoners would run short after these had been executed. "Will you assist at the execution?" M. Varnauld courteously asked me. "Certainly!" I answered. "I came here to learn all I could, and I wish to see how the heathen Canaque dies."

At three o'clock there was a commotion in the settlement of Teremba. Around the calaboose the convicts and inhabitants gathered. In all countries and amongst all people the *morituri* are objects of curiosity. The pleasurable excitement of viewing the doomed ones compensated for the loss of the siesta. In front of the post fifty men were paraded—thirty soldiers and sailors armed with chassepots, ten *franc tireurs* with old rifles, and ten convicts with axes only. The prison doors were opened, and five natives were brought forth. Four were handcuffed in pairs; and they were all joined by a stout rope. The last was a boy of only thirteen; the others of ages ranging from twenty-five to forty. All were quite naked except one, who had still the striped jersey worn by the boatmen of the port. Round his neck the boy had a small key suspended by a piece of string. I wondered whether he had ever possessed a box, or only wore it as an ornament. Another wore a garter adorned with shells; another had a string of beads round his neck. Their woolly hair had been dyed red by lime; some rude combs were stuck therein. They were splendid specimens of humanity; not large men, but with beautifully formed limbs. Two had broad noses and thick lips, but two had almost European features, one being very handsome, with fine eyes, which fixed themselves on mine inquiringly. He seemed to seek a friend, and it might be that he saw the sympathy which was in my soul. In colour, these men were light brown; in each the brain was well developed. They were of a race far superior to the Australian savage. They all looked curiously at the preparations, and listened to the orders of M. Varnauld. Now, *le chef d'arrondissement* was not a general favourite. Evil things were said of his conduct during the first days of the outbreak. He was accused of being harsh, and over cautious. I can only speak of M. Varnauld as I knew him. To me he always proved a kind host and courteous gentleman. I considered him the model of a French *préfet*. He was punctilious and exact, a man of great method and neatness in everything. Of his

person, attire, and surroundings he was very particular, a point alone which would prejudice one of Anglo-Saxon descent in his favour.' This was the only occasion I had of judging of M. Varnauld as a commander; and I am bound to say that he gave his orders clearly, and carried out everything in the most perfect manner.

Such men to the front, those to the rear, some specially to guard the prisoners; and, if they attempted to escape, or, if any attack *en route* was made, to shoot them down; these were the orders. I marched at the head with M. Vernauld, who, in his white gloves and small brass gorget, signifying that he was on service, looked quite a captain. A surgeon was with us. I asked if the prisoners knew their fate, and was told not. For six miles we toiled through the blazing sun. It was hard work; and it seemed to me cruel to drag those poor wretches out thus far to kill them. I watched them curiously as we marched along. The boy alone had a timid, curious look. I wished that the young savage with the handsome face and the fine eyes would not look at me with those glances of intelligence. To my dying day they will haunt me. When we entered the *niaouli* scrub, our two mounted guides scoured along our flanks with revolvers in hand ready to fire if a grasshopper stirred. But nothing was to be seen. At last we emerged on cultivated land. Some houses were seen around; these, however, were all deserted, the inhabitants having taken refuge in Moindou. Then we came to some stables and farm buildings, and the thatched hut of *le nommé Brière*. That these had not been destroyed was another proof, to my mind, that the murder of this man was an act of individual vengeance. His bones were visible in the ashes of the fire where the body was burnt.

A halt was called here for a time, whilst the convicts pulled down some palings and made a funeral pyre. Our prisoners were told to sit down. Did they know what they were brought hither for? The boy had broken off a small branch of the niaouli tree, and was beating off the mosquitoes from himself and his next neighbour. The rest talked in low tones. What were we waiting for? In a few minutes there was a call to attention. Down the path from the other side a body of men marched. It was a column of the *garde nationale* of Moindou, headed by M. de Laubarede. We saluted;

the new comers wheeled round, and then M. Varnauld addressed the prisoners. "Because your chief and those of your tribe have killed and pillaged," he said, "and because they have gone into revolt, and because *le nommé Brière* was killed on this spot, therefore you, *maudits* and *misérables*, are condemned *passer par les armes.*" This was the substance of M. Varnauld's address. He accused the men of all the crimes of Atai and Baptiste. The logic was bad, I thought, and the fury into which he tried to lash himself was thrown away. Nobody interested, but the men about to die, heard it; and they would soon be past all knowledge. And they? Did they understand this idiom, "to pass by arms"? One would hardly think so. The boy carelessly brushed away the mosquitos, one smiled, the others were impassible as before. "Have you anything to say?" asks M. Varnauld. They shook their heads, and replied "*rien.*" For a few minutes they were allowed to talk to each other, and then they were marched a few yards farther on into the camp of niaouli trees.

The orders were given clearly and quietly. There were five trees in line; to these they were bound. The boy was first uncoupled and taken to the tree, his hands tied behind him, and a bandage placed round his eyes. Then the others must have known the fate in store for them! But they did not wince or take any notice. One by one the process was repeated, the *surveillant* and a convict, who appeared to take brutal delight in the work, "officiating." There was not the slightest resistance or murmur from the prisoners. The last was my handsome friend. Released from his fellow, he remained for a couple of minutes perfectly free and unshackled, and again looked at me with those wistful eyes. Why did he not make one effort for life and freedom? If he had started, I would have bet that in the bush none of our rifles could hit him. I almost felt mad with the man, and my lips found words which he would not understand. "*Par ici,*" cried the *surveillant*—the Canaque was looking at me. "*Sacré nomme de Dieu!*" said the man, rushing forward, seizing the prisoner's wrist, and giving him a torrent of abuse for not being in a hurry to go to be killed. I felt indignant at this, and then the comical side of the question struck me. None of the men made the slightest resistance, although each one could have knocked the *surveillant* down with ease. As they stood bound to the trees, I could not think what familiar

scene I was reminded of. Then I remembered my youthful readings about Uncas and Chingachgook in "The Last of the Mohicans." M. Varnauld gave the order, twenty men were told off, six to each prisoner. At five paces these took aim, and at the words "make ready," the chassepots and minies were levelled, the *libérés* who were in the firing party being quite eager for the signal. And the victims against the trees?—four stood up erect, with chests inflated, and every nerve and muscle strung, ready to die like warriors. The boy alone had his head sunk on his breast. The word was given —a discharge—and three bodies slid softly to the ground. "The doctor to the ground," shouted M. Varnauld. I accompanied him. The other two bodies sank down. There was not a word nor a groan. The *coup de grâce* was given to three who yet lived by the revolver of the *surveillant, Le nommé Brière* and the pigs of Boyer were avenged. "Blood for blood!"

I had seen thousands of corpses in my life, but never immediately after death a naked one. It was a new and not a pleasant sensation to see these bodies dragged along the ground. *Rigor mortis* not having set in, the flesh presented a horrible flabby, quivery appearance. A convict with glee took a red handkerchief from the head of one of the deceased, and another tried to remove the jersey, but was ordered to desist. Dragged to the pile of wood, the bodies were thrown on, and some straw having been lighted, and other fuel heaped up, a fierce blaze went up to heaven. The smell of burning flesh is not nice, and I retreated to a distance, to smoke and moralise.

Shortly we formed column and marched back to dinner with what appetite we might. At table M. Varnauld said, "They died bravely enough." One of the mess retorted, "Oh! they are only brutes; they don't believe in a future, and so have no fear!" Then I—"Monsieur, we are taught in the classics that the highest virtue known to the ancients was to die as these men died. Again, in the glorious revolution of '89, when your '*noblesse*' went to the scaffold" (he was a Breton Catholic and a Legitimist to whom I spoke), "their chief pride was that they died with *sang froid*. They had not more courage than these poor Canaques. Let us be just. They perished like heroes, and I drink to the dead."

## CHAPTER X.

### THE COMMANDANT SERVAN.

I RETURNED to Noumea, and then sailed northward, in company with that brave and true young French gentleman, M. Houdaille. He was the largest station-holder and raiser of cattle in New Caledonia, and when the native insurrection broke out was making a rapid fortune. His *ranche* was situated in the northern interior of the island, and he was surrounded by tribes which had never given in adhesion to French rule. All the other settlers in that district had fled to the capital, but Houdaille was as brave as a lion. He went to Noumea, and interviewed the gallant Governor Olry. "Lend me," said he, "arms and ammunition, which I cannot obtain here, and a commission to defend the flag of France, and I will arm my stockmen and a few friendly natives, and you need not be afraid of the revolt spreading in my part of the *arrondissement* of Bourail." Governor Olry, a cool, brave, and liberal-hearted man, who never lost his head in the midst of the trying circumstances in which he was placed, must have been pleased to find one colonist willing to face the position. He hearkened to M. Houdaille's petition, and lent him 25 chassepots and 100 rounds of cartridge for each. Furnished with these, Houdaille was going home rejoicing, willing to fight all the Canaques in New Caledonia. With youth, good looks, and gay spirits, he was a favourite with all. We spent a charming day together *en voyage*. He much pressed me to disembark with him, and accompany him to his station, and see some fighting if the natives turned rusty. I was nearly doing so, but as the steamer only made monthly voyages, I might not have had the chance of getting round the north coast again; so it was arranged that after I had made the circuit of the island to Canala, I should cross to the west coast overland, and Houdaille would, on my communicating with him, meet me at Taremba, and escort me to his station, where I could pleasantly, in default of fighting, gain an insight into pastoral life

in New Caledonia. It was *au plaisir de vous revoir* when he landed next morning; but alas! Houdaille was as careless and as rash as he was brave. When I arrived at Canala, I heard that, two days after we parted, he and all his men had been surprised and massacred. The other day I was looking at his portrait, and wondering by what strange chances one is taken and the other left. *Requiescat in pace.*

Another portrait is before me as I write. It is a photograph of a young man, about thirty years of age, dressed in the French naval uniform, the heavy epaulettes and three *galons* on the arm denoting his rank as *lieutenant de vaisseau*—equal to that of commander in the English service. On the breast is the rosette of an *officier* of the Legion of Honour. Every one who sees this portrait says at once, "What a fine face! What determination!" The head is shaped something like that of the First Napoleon. The dark hair is cropped short; the features are fine, and a small black moustache shades the firm mouth; the black eyes look stern and commanding. It is a face which shows power, courage, self-control, determination, and a readiness to face all dangers, known and unknown. Yet the possessor of these qualities had, to his friends, a sweet smile, almost womanly, and his orders were ever given in a calm, low voice, which conciliated whilst it ensured obedience. His first rank as *chevalier* of the Legion was gained by one of the most gallant actions in the siege of Paris. Adea Servan, then a young officer, was sent from Brest with the other sailors who so nobly worked in defending the ill-fated city. One day when his detachment was on guard at the walls, a shell fell inside the ramparts. It contained death and destruction for a hundred men. Without a moment's hesitation M. Servan lifted the messenger of death, mounted the parapet, and threw it clear into the fosse below, where it expended its fury harmlessly on the solid earthworks. There is no doubt that he saved many lives, but he injured himself severely by the herculean effort he made, and to this day suffers acutely from the effects of this heroic conduct. This is the hero of the war in New Caledonia. As *chef d'arrondissement* and *commandant militaire* of the important district of Canala, Monsieur Adea Servan was, at the time of the outbreak, placed in a most trying position. He acquitted himself with the greatest coolness and intrepidity. Without any disparagement

to the many other gallant officers that I met, I do not think another man in the colony would have done his work. He proved himself bravest of the brave, and his comrades and France must ever be proud of him. The few slanderers who, comfortably seated at dinner in the *Cercle* at Noumea (I remember with regret those pleasant dinners, the witty talk, and the good fare!), jealously sneered at the services and aspersed the character of the young hero, are now, I trust, silenced.

When the Canaque insurrection in New Caledonia broke out, of all the officers in command in different parts of the colony, one man alone kept his head, and was equal to the occasion. When the news was brought to Canala of the 'massacres' at Bouloupari and La Foa, on the west coast of the island, there was commotion and excitement amongst the natives, and a great fear amongst the white inhabitants. This was the most important and populous place, with the exception of Noumea, in New Caledonia. In and around Canala are magnificent coffee plantations, and the valuable Boa-Kane nickel mines are a few miles distant, proving a great source of wealth to the stores in the little township. Here are the houses of many settlers, small farmers who raise cattle and cultivate maize in the immediate neighbourhood. There is a *pénitencier* here, where, as on the east coast, a number of convicts, good-conduct men, and *libérés* are supposed to have their reformation completed by cultivating the soil. The government buildings and church are handsome, and the house of M. Hanckar, in its beautiful garden, was the finest private dwelling in New Caledonia. Furnished in the English fashion, as this was, a visitor might imagine himself at St. Kilda or Darling Point, but that the cuisine was far better and more luxurious than that ever obtained in those haunts of colonial aristocracy; and the hearty welcome and hospitality shown to every stranger surpassed anything met in colonial *metropolitan* life. Canala has many and varied interests. It is a commercial port, a mining and agricultural centre, a convict establishment, a military post, a gendarme and telegraph station, and a mission of the Marist Brothers. Over all these the "commandant" rules supreme.

But in the midst of the many evidences of industry, wealth, civilisation, and progress, a primal element was ever present.

The natives simply swarmed in and around Canala. Within two miles of the town were three large villages, and in the neighbourhood, across the river, by the waters of the bay, on the seashore, inland in the glens, or on mountain slope, there were the *tribus* of thousands of Canaques. All day long Canala was crowded with *indigènes*, the majority of the men perfectly nude, the women with merely a short petticoat of green rushes, such as Eve might have made, to hide their nakedness. In striking contrast, however, there would occasionally be seen some great chief attired from head to foot in European costume, generally wearing the uniform of a French officer, given him to denote his rank. For as the native rule is quite patriarchal, the chiefs having power of life and death over their followers, and disposing of their goods and persons as they will, the French authorities have always found it easy and cheap to flatter the vanity of these rulers by trifling presents which secured their friendship. Clothes of any sort have hence come to be considered a mark of distinction, and the young Canaque buck delights to array himself in any garment. I have seen several clad only in a waistcoat, and one sweltering hot day I met a young chief who was stewing under an india-rubber waterproof coat which was buttoned to the chin. Certainly he suffered for being fine! I do not think the Canaque really likes clothes, but fashion rules in the Pacific as elsewhere. In some parts of New Caledonia it is said that the natives are being decimated through the effects of wearing European garments. Under a burning tropical sun they will march in heavy attire, and then if it comes on to rain, they peel to the buff to preserve their clothes! Highly susceptible to cold, as these islanders are, this has been a fruitful source of consumption: the present of an old coat and a bottle of rum to a Canaque was said to ensure his early death. But at Canala the majority of the natives lived and moved as nature made them. Naked and not ashamed, their supple, lithe, well-proportioned figures were beautiful to look upon. I have seen many a dusky warrior, whose form would have served the Grecian sculptor of old as a model for Apollo. Use is everything; and the white inhabitants of Canala were perfectly accustomed to the sight of these nude *indigènes*. The civilised sense of propriety was no longer shocked, although there was a ludicrous incongruity in the sight of a naked savage

buying tobacco in a store where Parisian knick-knacks were sold, or lolling outside the telegraph office.

For years the two races had dwelt together at Canala in outward peace and friendship. The natives, perhaps, occasionally ate each other, but that was distinctly their affair. The news of the massacres on the west coast of the island fell like a bombshell on this quiet community. Many of the white inhabitants were impressed with the idea that a general rising of the natives was intended. If the Canaques in the *arrondissement* of Canala rebelled, there would be no safety outside the capital, unless on board a man-of-war. There was not a moment to be lost. M. Servan had not been long at Canala, but knew the native character well, having been five years in the colony as aide-de-camp to a former governor, and afterwards "captain of the port" at Noumea. He called together the oldest residents, and conferred with them. The result was a telegram to the governor, in which it was pointed out that the Canaques in that district were much excited at the news of the massacres on the other side of the mountains; that it was necessary to prevent the revolt spreading beyond the first limits; that on this, the east side, there were no troops available; that the natives were seized with the brutal hereditary passion for war, and they would either prove friends or foes; and so M. Servan proposed, with the governor's authority, to secure the Canaques of Canala by enlisting a number, and, having led them across the *Chaîne Centrale*, to operate against the rebels. The governor's reply stated that none of the few soldiers there must be taken from Canala, they must be kept for the protection of the inhabitants, and he questioned if the Canaques would be faithful to any officer sent in command. Two or three telegrams followed, and then M. Servan summoned Nondo, the great war chief. This grand old heathen was the veteran warrior in that district. To him said Servan:

"You have heard of the bad Canaques of Bouloupari who have killed the French people there. They are your ancient enemies. Will you make war on them if Monsieur the Governor asks you?"

Then Nondo: "I and my braves will do so if Monsieur the Commandant, who is our father here, will lead us."

On this idea, Servan sent a last telegram: "On my honour, I believe this is the only way to prevent the revolt spread-

ing here. If Monsieur the Governor permits, I will start to-night *alone* with the Canaques; only one man's life will thus be risked." Governor Olry, in Noumea, while people were flying on board ships in the harbour, and while a panic of fear was over all, must have been gratified to find one man who did not lose his head, and was not afraid of a dusky skin. Governor Olry and the Commandant Servan, I believe, were the only men who grasped the situation. Assent was wired, and that night, twenty-four hours after the news of the massacres, Adea Servan started from Canala to cross the *Chaîne Centrale* by torchlight.

But first, every precaution was taken to guard the white inhabitants. The women were all brought into the town, and at night slept in the stone "blockhouse." The commandant's residence was barricaded, and turned into a fort. All the Europeans, convicts included, were armed, while patrols scoured the neighbourhood, and a vigilant watch was kept. His lieutenant was placed in command, and then Adea Servan set out. Ladies at Canala have told me how they wept, for many were assured he was going to certain death—that his followers would take the first opportunity of assassinating him. That night march must have been the hardest trial of nerve the young officer had ever endured, and was as brave an act as soldier ever performed. But his cool intrepidity was rewarded. Nondo was true to his word. They crossed the *Chaîne Centrale*, descended into the valley of the Ouameni, pursued and harried the rebels, effecting a junction with the column of the Commandant Rivière, and then, arrangements for future operations having been made, M. Servan and his followers returned homewards. The object had been gained. The rebels were confined to a certain district, and Canala was safe, Nondo and his warriors being now pledged to support the French. Afterwards, they, on many an expedition, proved that the trust reposed in them by the young commandant, whom they obeyed like children, was well placed.

I landed at Canala one October morning. I had made the tour of the coast in the steamer *Ocean Queen*, one of the pleasantest trips possible. The commander of this vessel, Captain Lerede, proved to me a most agreeable *cicerone* and *compagnon de voyage*. I have to thank him for many courtesies in detaining his vessel for hours and days at different places of interest on the coast, to

give me an opportunity to inspect the same. After explaining my wishes in this respect to Captain Lerede, from the first he did all in his power for me. He agreed to stop thirty-six hours at the port of Pam, to let me visit the copper mines at Balade.

That was one of the hardest day's work in my life. We had been playing *baccarat* till early in the morning with some officers at Pam—a war correspondent must make himself sociable, be *bon garçon*. If he loses a few pounds cheerfully over-night he is all the more likely to have friends on the war-path next day. The trial of nerve when I followed kind and courteous Captain Warren down the slippery ladders of the mine was one of the hardest I remember. After stumbling about for two hours amongst the convict labourers—lent to Mr. Higginson by the French Government for one penny a day—I was dead beat, and declined to mount the perpendicular ladders again. So I ascended in an empty cage used to convey the copper to the surface. When half way up I was amused by remembering that the ore was discharged by the bottom falling out of the cage when a catch was displaced. And there was nothing to hold on by!

Before we went to breakfast I was interviewed by a deputation of miners. It was a pleasure as well as a compliment to be asked to shake hands with the leaders. There, in a strange country, in the midst of cannibals and convicts, the kinship of race was between us. I was astonished to find that I was well known, by name at least, to the white men there. *The Australasian* and *The Argus* were well read on the Diahot River. But there is no saying in what part of the world a man's written words may not be brought up against him. When the miners asked me to give an address to them, I had pleasure in complying, Captain Lerede postponing his departure for another twelve hours. This being a free show, my audience of fifty or sixty miners were in a very good humour, and I was enabled to amuse them for an hour and a half with very little difficulty. The hall was weatherboard, with a grass roof, and was used as a reading-room by the miners, and sometimes prayers were held there on a Sunday. It was the only place they had for social meeting, except the billiard-room at the *Débit*, where there was an English table kept by a relative of a New South Wales knight and statesman, at which the miners were "lambed down" after their monthly pay. That was as strange a lecture experience as a man

could have. I shall never forget the Rembrandt appearance of the interior, lighted as it was only by a few lamps. The shadows played strange freaks, and if the honest faces of the miners were at times illuminated, there was a sinister gloom over the countenances of the *libérés* who crowded around the door. The few black "labour boys" who squatted on their haunches, and grinned and laughed when the white men did, completed the picture. What a moonlight ride Captain Warren and myself had on the tramway which runs from the mines to the wharf on the Diahot River, six miles away! Our car was drawn by twenty "boys," who yelled and shouted and jumped about on the track, their black skins gleaming and their white teeth flashing in the moonlight.

So pleased was I with the accommodation of the *Ocean Queen*, and the courtesy of her commander, that I had no intention of staying at Canala more than two days, which would have given me time to visit the nickel mines, and the coffee plantations. From what I had heard of the Commandant Servan I was not prepossessed in his favour. My very good friends Numa Joubert and Douglas Carter, of Noumea, had, it is true, spoken in the highest terms of the young officer. The Commandant Rivière and Captain Rathouis, when I was in the camp at Fonwharii, had ever a good word for their young colleague; but as they all belonged to the navy, I fancied it might be professional partiality. But from the officers of the *infanterie marine* and others, I acquired the most erroneous notions respecting M. Servan. Before I left New Caledonia I discovered the jealousy existing between the two branches of the service—the navy and infantry. I heard that the talk of any great service done by the commandant of Canala was all *blague*, that his Canaque followers were but a lot of vagabond pillagers, little better than the insurgents, whom it would be well, by-and-by, to exterminate. If these brave talkers could have had their way, a war of race would have been commenced, in which case it is doubtful when and how it would have ended. But the governor, M. Olry, deserved every honour for his efforts in suppressing the indiscriminate slaughter of innocent natives, the barbarity of which could not be excused on the ground of policy, and the result of which, if continued, would have been a general rising of the Canaque race against the handful of white rulers.

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From all I had heard of M. Servan, I formed an idea that this leader of the Canaque auxiliaries was a swashbuckling *blagueur*, in whom I should find no points of interest. It is true M. Servan had one staunch friend, whose instincts I should have trusted. Petite Jeanne, the daughter of the courteous *directeur* of the *pénitencier* at Fonwharii, the headquarters of the camp there, was the pet of the officers, spoilt by all to such an extent that I reckon her head was turned for life. But even after I had played with her in the garden, and paid court to her by the hour, or after Captain Rathouis had narrated to her the thrilling story of "*Bonnet Rouge*" in a charming manner, which would have captivated for ever a young lady of maturer years, Jeanne had but one reply to the question, "Who do you love?" It was always "M'sieur Servan." But then I thought, "Children lavish their affections on all sorts of strange people; some even love me as much as Jeanne does M. Servan; but I do not suppose that fact would prepossess any one in my favour, or gain me a government billet." So, from one cause or another, I concluded I should not at all approve of the commandant of Canala.

## CHAPTER XI.

### A GREAT WAR CHIEF.

However, I found M. Servan not only what his portrait indicates, but to me ever the most courteous of friends and hosts. We visited together the mines, the coffee plantations, the mission of Nickety; called upon the chiefs of the different villages; and made ourselves popular with the native ladies by presents of tobacco. Under any circumstances this visit to Canala would have been most enjoyable, but in this time of war it was particularly attractive. In three days M. Servan intended to cross the *Chaîne Centrale* with Nondo and 500 warriors, and again fight the insurgents. The night before a few chiefs were asked to dine at the house of the commandant. Nondo and Jelima were the men of the most importance. In New Caledonia, as in Fiji, each tribe had generally two chiefs, the one taking command in war, the other the civil head. A "medicine man," or "sorcerer," was often a third factor of potentiality, making up a triumvirate ruling the people by much the same means as in civilised society. The sorcerers performed hideous rites, presided at the cannibal feasts, and furnished charms, supposed to make the wearers lucky in love or war. The sorcerer attached to the fortunes of Atai, the great rebel chief, was the most celebrated in New Caledonia. He was a dwarf, possessing an enormous head, which, when he was killed, was cut off, preserved in spirits, and sent to Paris. I could not find out that the natives of New Caledonia had any idea of a future state. Like primal man in all stages, they lived in dread of "the shadowy canvas of the dark." The unknown forces of Nature were terrible to them. In the gloomy depths of the forest lurked a horrible monster, *Djoui* by name, ever ready to pounce on a stray Canaque. That was all the religion they had. The sorcerers protected them from *Djoui*.

The great war chief Nondo was as ugly a "nigger" as you could find in the world. Over six feet high, savage and ferocious

in countenance, with the lobes of his ears pierced with enormous holes, and distended till they almost touched his shoulders, Nondo in his every-day, muscular, native nudity would not be a handsome auxiliary at a dinner party. But Nondo, to do honour to the Commandant Servan and myself, was on this occasion attired in an old pair of pants, and an officer's coat. Jelima had a complete suit of uniform, and actually wore boots, which, however, by the shuffling of his feet, caused him great uneasiness. He was not a bad-looking native, and spoke French well. The other chiefs were also clothed. They all behaved with the most perfect propriety at dinner, closely imitating our proceedings, using their napkins and knives and forks as if to the manner born. They drank wine and rum-punch as if they liked that part of the proceedings.

Nondo could never be looked upon as anything but a hideous old ruffian, but on the war-path he was a faithful comrade to me. Besides brute strength and courage he possessed strategy; for, with pieces of bread, he marked out on the dinner-table the mode of attack to be pursued on a large party of the rebels, whom he had information were hidden near the La Foa river, on the western side of the island. Following out his explanation of his plans, interlarded with many a "*savez M'sieur Servan,*" I came to the conclusion that Nondo was as good a general as any French officer in New Caledonia. M. Servan explained to his native guests that I was a great warrior chief sent by the Government of Australia to see how the Canaques of Canala would fight. The dusky warriors therefore surveyed me with greater respect than perhaps I deserved, and, altogether, it was a pleasant dinner party.

Early in the morning our little army was paraded in line, the men naked, armed with spears and clubs and tomahawks. Nondo, with his brother, Salama, and a few trusty chiefs, were presented with chassepôts. M. Servan was mounted on a horse, I on a great mule belonging to M. Hanckar. This animal, Jack by name, was reported to be sufficiently strong and sure-footed to carry me over the *Chaîne Centrale.* Before the journey was half over I was never so sorry for any animal in my life. A short address was made by the commandant in French. It was translated or added to by the chiefs for their followers; then we started off, following each other up the mountain-side in line.

Little by little we ascended from the plain. When we arrived at the spur of the mountain, one saw below not only fields of coffee around the settlement of Canala, showing the industry of the white man, but cocoa-nut and banana groves, and fields of yam and taro which had been industriously attended to by the natives. These, cannibal though they may be at certain times, equal the Chinese in careful attention to irrigation. There is hardly a prettier spot in the world than the plains beneath, as you stand on the spur of the *Chaîne Centrale* above Canala. On the hill-side the streams are conducted along trenches which run from terrace to terrace, where the esculent and nourishing taro is cultivated. The road across the mountains, running from the east to the west coast of New Caledonia, was but a bridle-path. On reaching the gorges, one passed through a primal jungle of tropical vegetation. Great trees towered overhead. The path wound round the mountain in a gradual ascent. Below were sheer precipices, the depths of which were lost in the dense overgrowth of ferns and palms. The murmur of rippling waters was on either hand. It was only by rolling a rock from the bridle path that one could discover the danger which would befall a traveller who made a false step.

For myself, I sat still and smoked at my ease, while Jack carefully picked his way. M. Servan was at the head; I, a few paces behind. Looking back, the line of Canaque warriors winding round the hill formed a picturesque sight. Wherever there were any breaks in the ground for a possible enemy to lurk, scouts were sent forward, rushing through the brushwood like hounds. One thing was particularly noticeable. Either Nondo or his brother Salama kept just ahead of me, the one relieving the other. Apparently, I was their special charge. Nondo, as a great war chief of Canala, considered it incumbent upon him to see that the great war chief from Australia met with no harm or discourtesy from any of his followers. I endeavoured to ingratiate myself with them by presents of tobacco, of which I had a quantity cut into small pieces in my haversack. This was one of the most romantic journeys a man could take, beautiful in the surroundings of hushed and still Nature, interesting in the strange specimens of humanity accompanying us, exciting in the prospect that at any moment there might be a brush with the rebels. We arrived at the highest point just about sun-down, and the

glorious day culminated. Far away, miles below, one saw the sun sinking to rest in the waters of the sea; whilst, on the other side, the ocean line was also visible. From the height of the back-bone of the island, to east and to west, hill and forest and plain were visible.

Now we made a descent into a little valley where we were to rest for the night, passing the ruins of a house belonging to one of the settlers who had been first murdered. At this place, named Coinde, a small blockhouse had been established as a refuge for mounted messengers between Bouloupari, La Foa, and Canala. A sergeant and four soldiers were quartered there. This block-house, as the French called it, was a rough building of wood, surrounded by a high stockade, and a trench with a draw-bridge. Here M. Servan and I were to sleep, while Nondo and his followers camped on the site of an old village about a quarter of a mile distant. Besides the native warriors, there were some fifty women, who acted as bearers of food for the party.

*En route* I had interviewed Nondo and Salama as to whether they were likely to have a *pilou-pilou* at night, this entertainment being a general finish to a day on the war-path, and I had especially urged Nondo to let me be present. On mentioning this to Servan, however, he strongly protested. "*Mon ami,*" said he, "I hold myself responsible for your life. Should we meet an enemy and you fell fairly, that would be the fortune of war. But if by any chance you were to get into trouble with Nondo's followers, I could never forgive myself. I feel sure of him myself; but, as you know, half the French officers, my comrades, say that these Canaques will turn upon me some day. It does not do, perhaps, to trust them too much; therefore I have only armed Nondo and a few chiefs with chassepôts. If you went amongst them at a *pilou-pilou*, they, excited by the dance, might be offensive to you as a strange white man, or you might, without desire, do something to rouse their enmity. So rest here, my friend, and do not attempt to see the *pilou-pilou.*" Of course this protest of Servan's only served to arouse a greater curiosity, and a desire to be present at the evening's fun, and I told Nondo that after supper I would meet him outside the stockade. We made a good evening meal; the sergeant, as being in command, took the chair; Servan, with French courtesy,

insisting upon this non-commissioned officer joining us, and taking the post of honour. In this matter of *cameraderie* between the different ranks of the service, and of polite communication between a superior and a subordinate, not descending to too great a familiarity, the French army is far superior to the British. This sergeant, our host, was a fine young fellow, and I dare say by this time is a commissioned officer.

M. Servan, suffering from the effects of an old wound, was tired out, and soon threw himself down on his bed of dried ferns. Then I told the sergeant and his men that I intended to take a little promenade. It required some persuasion to induce them to lower the drawbridge. Once outside the stockade I found the faithful Nondo awaiting me. We soon reached the camp. A circle of fires had been lit under the palm-trees, which enclosed an open space. Round about were some old huts, all of hay-stack shape, and rude shelters of boughs had also been hastily constructed. On a little hillock Nondo stood with several chiefs, and made an oration in his native tongue to the men and women. Then the war dance began.

Standing in line, the male savages beat time with their feet, with a swaying of their bodies, and gesticulating of their arms, singing a loud chorus. Through the dim smoke, flashing eyes shone out of the dusky mass. Louder and louder grew the strains, quicker and quicker became the motions of the bodies. They advanced, retreated, mingled together, then surrounded me. All the chiefs were now yelling and dancing. Salama explained to me that I must join the throng. I replied that the great war chiefs of Australia did not dance. This satisfied them for a moment; then they pressed around me again. I was with them, and I must go through the show. Almost before I knew it, I was denuded; and there, in the midst of dusky skins, the contagion of the moment seized me, and I too stamped and yelled, and acted as like a maniac as it is possible for a presumably sane man to do.

How they applauded, and laughed, and cheered! Then Nondo gave a cry for silence. The gigantic chief placed his hand upon my head, and made a speech to the throng. Of this I could only understand two words—"*M'sieur Thomas.*" Then he produced a knife. Was I to be sacrificed to their taste for human flesh? Really, it was becoming very interesting. Nondo

made a scratch on his arm, drawing a little blood. He repeated the operation on my right arm, and mingled the two streams for a second. Then, taking from his head the plume badge of a great war chief—white cock's feathers tipped with black—he stuck it into my hair. A few words to the people, and a yell arose which should certainly have waked M. Servan, though a quarter of a mile away.

"Now," said Nondo to me in broken French, "you are all the same as me, M. Thomas. You are a great war chief of Canala, '*vous prendrez que vous voulez!*'"

I gathered up my clothes. Hot, dusty, perspiring, and tired, I retreated to the blockhouse, where I found Servan tossing about in uneasy sleep. I soon lay by his side, and dreamt that I was cut up and eaten by the Canaques, who grumbled much that I did not supply a sufficient quantity of kidney fat, which is a choice morsel of the anthropophagist. In the morning M. Servan was very angry when I told him of this adventure.

We were early on the road. I found that my companions in last night's *pilou-pilou* looked upon me with great respect, so the plume in my cap had really a value. By the afternoon we had arrived at the banks of the La Foa river, where a blockhouse and stockade had been erected, and where a detachment of French soldiers kept watch and ward over the fires of the rebels, which at night were seen all round on the hills. Our Canaque contingent camped outside. As usual, Nondo dined with us at the mess at night, and took his share of the wine and rum like a white man; in fact, in this respect he was very white indeed.

In the morning the native army started for a raid along the valley of Fonomolo, and towards the mountains of Oua Tom. The 300 warriors were divided into two bands. M. Servan, myself, two young Australian settlers named O'Donoghue, and a convict who was deputed to act as my aide-de-camp, were the only white men in the crowd. A few women followed us through the jungle path. We marched in single file, ascending the hill to a spot where M. Servan and myself lay down, and in safety viewed, through our field-glasses, the operations. A few days before an attack had been made on the blockhouse by some of the rebels, who had then retreated into the bush, confident that they could not be followed by the French soldiers. Now,

in the noonday heat, when the native always rests, we meant to surprise them. Nondo and one band took the right, and Salama and the other party the left. They were to drive the human game into an open space in the hill-side, where they might be shot down or speared or tomahawked. Soon cries commenced. The war-cry of Canala, a distinct note, was loudly heard. Then out into the open ran some fugitives, and after them our native allies. Looking at this through our field-glasses was one of the most exciting plays that a man could witness. The natives would stand face to face, hurl spears at each other, and hack each other with tomahawks until one fell. Then the victor would jump on his prostrate foe, and cut off his head with a tomahawk. Up and down the hill-side, in and out of the bush, this game went on. But Nondo, a skilful general, like Von Moltke, had always arranged that our side should have a preponderating number in the attack, a good working majority.

After an hour's fighting, a messenger brought the news to us that a mile away on the right a brisk contest was going on. We marched thither through the bush. Down the hill, advancing to meet us, were a party of our allies. M. Servan and we four other white men halted, to meet them. The natives commenced to run, hurling their spears, waving their clubs over their heads, shouting and yelling. They rushed towards us as if in anger. "By ——," cried O'Donoghue, "they are coming for us!" and he levelled his Snider. I struck it up, seeing that Servan was cool and collected, although it certainly did seem as if we were to be "rushed." They were right upon us, they surrounded us, their spears at our breasts, their clubs and tomahawks over our heads. Then suddenly they diverged into a circle, and threw some ghastly human heads at our feet, raising a song of triumph and dancing the *pilou-pilou*.

Enough work for one day! We took the homeward track. We had left the women half a mile behind, but they had not been idle. With cocoa-nut and banana leaves they had made rough baskets, into which they slung the dozen or so of human heads, and they also took charge of some fifty captured women and children, the lawful spoils of the Canaques of Canala. It was a distressing sight to see the manner in which one handsome young girl looked at the dead features of her late lord and

master, as the head lay rolling on the ground before her. She made a motion as if to touch it with a last caress; and then covered her face to hide her tears. One of the women of our party smote her on the cheek with some native expression.

"What does she say?" I asked Salama in French.

"Oh," said he, "she says she is a great fool. She will soon find another husband, as she has herself."

"How is that?"

"Why, it is but the last time we were out that we killed *her* husband, and now she belongs to Peta; and it is through her that we heard that these other Canaques were hidden in Fonomolo."

I looked at this woman with disgust.

In two parties we took the track back to La Foa, where the home-guard of French soldiers was protecting our dinners. Now the fighting was all over, I assumed my proper grade as a great war-chief, and proudly marched at the head of one column. My friends the O'Donoghues, my convict, an old chief, and the women, followed me. But soon the ancient warrior stopped, and pointed to some bent and twisted leaves on the shrubs bordering the path. In imperfect French he explained to me that the Canaques of Bouloupari had gone that way, and that we had better retrace our steps, and join M. Servan. "How did he know?" He took up the leaves and tried to read their message to me. To him it was as clear as any printed placard on the wall of an English town. So many warriors had fled this way, and this was a signal to their comrades who had escaped, to follow them. I had often heard that the natives of New Caledonia communicated with each other by symbols; but this was the first evidence I had met—one more striking and extraordinary than anything ever known even among those great manufacturers of "signs," the North American Indians. But I thought it far better to go on. I was always doubtful of my own powers in retreat. The women, however, ran back in a fright; they could make their way quickly through the bush. I stamped my foot, and pointed to Nondo's war-plume on my head. I insisted that the grizzly warrior should lead us onward. He did not at all like the contract, but obeyed. After a time we rested in an open space, lying in the grass; when suddenly, not more than twenty yards off, out of one of the clumps of bush,

there ran across the open about fifty savages. Whether they saw us or not I cannot say. If they did, perchance they took us for the head of the column which had attacked them and slain their comrades at Oua Tom. At all events, they disappeared in the bush on our right. A few minutes earlier, and we should have met them, when perhaps these lines would not have been written. Another instance in which men's lives have been saved by taking a quiet rest and not overtaxing Nature!

Onward for two miles through the jungle path, which became so narrow that there was scarcely room to pass. The trees and shrubs were interlaced overhead, causing a deep shade. Not a sound of bird or beast. The silence became ominous. By my compass I was sure that we were taking a short cut to La Foa; but short cuts are proverbially dangerous. Suddenly we heard some yells ahead. The old guide stopped. The path was guarded by pieces of telegraph wire twisted from side to side, evidently as a protection against some night surprise. On the other side of this was a rude fence.

"Give me my gun!" I said to my convict, who carried it. The poor fellow, being left totally unarmed, seemed rather indisposed to do so.

"Now, boys," I said to the O'Donoghues, "it is shoulder to shoulder."

We loosened our revolvers; the native cut down the wire, and then, firing a volley at the fence, and loading again, we made a rush for it. But no shower of spears greeted us as we had anticipated. We scrambled over the slight obstruction, and there found an empty camp. Some low huts, with bedding of leaves and blankets still warm where the natives had been lying, but the foe had fled. Whether fighting men had been resting there, or women guarding the camp till their return, was an open question. However, I for one was very well satisfied to find it empty. We yelled loud enough to impress those in retreat that all the Canaques in Canala were upon them; and then, striking along the path to the left, we found ourselves on the banks of the La Foa river. We waded along the centre of this, and in due time came to the blockhouse. By accident we had struck upon a camp of the rebels, where they had lain for weeks secure against intrusion from the French.

The Commandant Rivière had arrived during the day from

Fonwharii. He was very much surprised to see our small party returned without Servan, who arrived an hour afterwards, my short cut having saved two miles *en route*. When Servan, Nondo, and the warriors did appear, there was a little ceremony. M. Rivière, known by the natives as the principal naval and military authority in New Caledonia, was humbly saluted by the chiefs. Then they came and placed at his feet the ghastly trophies of the day, in the shape of the heads we had taken.

"There is a simplicity about this," said M. Rivière to me. "These honest people, perhaps, after all, have the right idea of war. You see, there is no question of the number of killed and wounded in this case, as they cut off the heads. They are all killed!"

Then we went in to dinner, which the French soldiers had so nobly guarded during our absence. Within the stockade was a rough shed, where I performed my ablutions. An aged convict had been appointed as my body-servant, a nice-looking, grey-haired old man, with a saddened expression, as though he had endured great grief. Whilst he was laying out a change of flannels for me from my knapsack, I washed in the smallest of tin-bowls. I had wished to take a dip in the river, but had been expressly forbidden by M. Rivière, on account of the danger from the lurking Canaque. Suddenly there was a shriek. At my feet, clinging to my knees, was Pierre, my servant. I never saw a man so terror-stricken. "Save me! save me!" he cried. A few feet off was a young French soldier holding one of the heads from our spoil by the hair. Shaking it, he said to my convict, "Eat this! eat this!"

"Send him away! send him away!" cried the poor man.

I despatched the soldier about his business with a few of the phrases one picks up in barracks, as in bush. Then to the convict—

"Get up, you old fool! What are you so frightened about? That was only a dead man's head, and could not hurt you! I suppose you were sent here, like the rest of them, for murdering some one? What is it?"

But the man seemed paralysed. He would do nothing but crouch in the corner and shake and tremble. That night, sitting next to M. Rivière at dinner, I narrated the incident to him.

"Ah!" said he, "that was Pierre, *le bon homme* Pierre! Do you not know his story? Ah! he was a real *farçeur*."

"No," said I. "Tell me then, my commandant, the story of Pierre."

"Oh! Pierre, you know, was a peasant proprietor in Brittany. He had a handsome wife. He was very jealous of her—he had reason, no doubt. So he killed the other gentleman, and cut out his heart and cooked it. And when madame came home from the field, he said, 'I have bought a calf's heart.' Then they ate it together; after which he killed madame, and so he is here in New Caledonia. The jury felt for him, and did not send him to the guillotine, but merely returned a verdict of 'guilty, with extenuations.'"

I requested the next day to be supplied with a servant who had only killed a man, without having eaten him. Thinking of the man I had met at Bouloupari, who had threatened to escape to Australia, and thinking of the combined convict and cannibal Pierre, I was forced to the conclusion that New Caledonia sheltered a large number of most objectionable neighbours to Australia.

## CHAPTER XII.

### CONVICTS IN NEW CALEDONIA.

THE native war lasted some months, but after. Atai and his prime minister and sorcerer were killed, it became but an affair of hunting down the fugitives. Before returning to Australia, I wished to visit the convict depôt on the island of Nou, and the Communist settlement on the Isle of Pines. I bade adieu to Henri Rivière, whom I was never to see more, since five years afterwards he, with thirty of his men, was "impaled" by the "Black Flags" in Tonquin, dying the most horrible death possible. I liked M. Rivière, and am sorry that I was compelled, as a public duty, to point out in the journal I had the honour to represent, the cruel manner in which, by his orders, the Canaques were treated. He but followed the traditions of his race and training. M. Rivière was, I understand, very angry indeed at what I wrote. It had been proposed to acknowledge my services as an Australian journalist in a manner which would have been certainly very pleasing to my vanity. But although I heard of this, I was compelled to write the truth, and none could contradict my statements. The only *revanche* M. Rivière took was in totally ignoring my existence in his book *Souvenirs de la Nouvelle Calédonie*, published in 1880, in many respects one of his most charming works of fiction. The ruck of the French officers, who heard garbled reports of my letters, loudly expressed their intention of giving me "six inches of cold steel," or the equivalent," an ounce of lead." I was accused of having abused the hospitality shown to me. The idea that because, in the discharge of his duty, a journalist is received into a military mess, he cannot criticise the actions of officers in the field, is one which, if carried out, would hamper all just freedom of the pen.

I bade adieu to Adea Servan; but I saw him again in Sydney before his departure, invalided by his wounds to France. I rode from Fonwharii, to the coast. At Taremba I was given a passage in a gunboat bound to Noumea. On board were some sick and

wounded soldiers, and a number of refugees flying to the capital, the revolt having broken out in fresh districts in the north. Shortly after we left a heavy storm came on. Luckily we were inside the great barrier reef, but our progress, in the midst of blinding rain, with thick clouds hanging all around, was very hazardous. At last we had to run into a small bay, and cast both anchors. All through that evening the thunder roared and the lightning flashed. The rain fell like a massive sheet of water. The young lieutenant who was in command did his best to make one comfortable; and with potted luxuries, good wine, and *kirschwasser*, I managed to pass the time. The refugees crowded below must have had a very uncomfortable time of it.

The commander's cabin on deck was very small, with only room for one to lie down, but at least I was dry there. At ten o'clock, with true French courtesy, the lieutenant offered me his bed, but I would not hear of this; he was wet to the skin, having been on deck all day, and must change his clothes, and take rest himself. Surely there was some place down below where I could be sheltered. Just then the *contremaître* came forward, and announced that one of the wounded men was dead. A conversation took place through the inch of door which was opened, then the lieutenant turned to me—

"If Monsieur insists, then, it shall be as he wishes. Monsieur has been a soldier and will not mind. There is a place vacant below."

I was only anxious to get out of the way, and let the hospitable young officer have room to get off his wet things. Dry and snug as I was myself, I felt mean in thus incommoding him. In a few minutes a couple of sailors came to the door, and led me through the darkness of the night to the cabin aft. The rain came down in such torrents that I was wet through before I reached the stairs. At the bottom I saw by the dim lamp a number of male forms huddled together in the midst of a lot of baggage. By their groans these appeared in a very bad way. *Mal de mer* and fear combined had proved too much for them. We passed into another large cabin, which had bunks all around, each occupied by a sick or wounded soldier, except one, the best. In a corner some women and children had camped on rugs and shawls. One young mother was sitting up nursing her infant, and soothing another child who was moaning piteously.

"Monsieur will sleep there, if he does not mind," said the *contremaître*, pointing to the empty bunk. He left.

"But, madame," said I, "it is impossible that I can sleep there, and let ladies and children lie on the floor. Take that place, I pray, and I can find some other outside."

"Oh, *mon Dieu!* no. Never could I rest there."

"Well, at least put the children there; they will be more comfortable. See, there are blankets, and they can be arranged well."

"Never, Monsieur, could I let my children sleep there. Thanks, Monsieur, but if you do not fear, will Monsieur rest there himself?" The females all roused up.

"Do not go. Rest there, Monsieur, but do not ask us."

I felt flattered at the idea that I was looked upon as a protector by these ladies, whose liege lords were *hors de combat* outside, so wishing them "Good night," I rolled into the bunk, which was furnished with a good mattress, pulled the blankets over my wet things, and in a few minutes was sound asleep, the last thing I remember being the words, "But they are droll, these English. See you, he sleeps as if——." I wondered what I had done which was so very droll. Gone to bed in my wet clothes? But under the circumstances they could not expect otherwise. The sun was high in the heavens when I awoke, and we were steaming rapidly through the now calm waters towards Noumea. All the passengers were on deck. There I found my female friends.

"But, ladies, tell me why I am droll."

"Ah! you think nothing of it. You would wish me and my children to sleep there; but *nous autres*, we would not rest on the bed from which a corpse has been taken to make room for us. *Mon Dieu!* Do not touch the child, Monsieur; you have blood all on your clothes."

This was true, and I saw the situation immediately. The lieutenant and his men thought I understood it on the night before. The body of the soldier had been carried forward, and placed on a gun, covered with a sheet. Well, I had had a good night's rest; but I scarcely think it was quite fair on the corpse to plant it out in the rain in that way. I understood now why the women so anxiously wanted my company; they were afraid the body might be brought back. The vainest man could not flatter himself much over this.

One requires an order from the governor before being allowed to land on the island of Nou, opposite Noumea. In the town one knew very little as to what went on at the convict depôt. A stranger in the capital could amuse himself with strolling along the boulevards, sitting in the *Place des Cocotiers*, and visiting the *casernes*. Life to the officers and officials, who wore gold and silver stripes respectively, seemed easy enough. They paraded, or went to a *bureau* for two hours at early morning; then *déjeuner* and a siesta; a ride or promenade at five o'clock, before dinner; afterwards *baccarat* or *lansquenet* at the *Cercle*. Odd intervals they filled up in making love to their neighbours' wives. Very pleasant companions one met at the *Cercle*, willing to talk on any subject except the *déportation* and *transportation*. But for the *bouleversement* of things generally during the native revolt, I should never have been enabled to learn so much about the convicts of New Caledonia.

Still, the passing stranger with no sources of information could see that the convict was the chief feature in New Caledonia. As during the old days in English penal settlements, they were employed in every capacity in the capital, from the government offices to the kitchens of the officials. Any one could get a convict loaned to him on payment of ten francs a month to the government. The employer had a great advantage, in securing the faithful services of a galley slave by a little kindness, and by the knowledge the latter had that if he was not useful and obedient he would lose this comparative freedom during the daytime. So the convicts were gardeners, washermen, and cooks to the officers. Nurses even, for one saw them in charge of children in the street; or, as M. Rivière put it—"Ils promènent les enfants, ou plutôt les enfants les promènent, car il n'est pas permis aux condamnés de sortir seuls par les rues. Assemblage bizarre, et cependant, en son étrangeté même, il y a quelque chose de moral, je n'oserais dire de touchant. L'enfant ignore, il sourit à cet homme comme il le ferait à sa nourrice ou à sa bonne. L'homme, de son côté, lui sourit, joue avec lui, quelquefois le porte dans ses bras. Qui saura jamais les inconscientes profondeurs de l'âme? Peut-être le condamné se revoit-il alors en son enfance, quand il était un innocent et qu'il faisait un beau soleil." That is quite in the style of Victor Hugo. But I never met a Jean Valjean in New Caledonia.

The convicts in New Caledonia, as in Norfolk Island, were occupied in great public works. They built their own prisons and barracks and offices, and constructed roads around Noumea and to the interior. One saw hundreds of convicts at work about the capital, guarded only by a few *surveillants*. It was strange to see fifty prisoners controlled only by a man in uniform carrying a white umbrella. But under his braided *blouse* each *surveillant* had a revolver. There was the iron hand beneath the velvet glove here. Any one attempting to escape would have been shot down. At sunrise great barges filled with convicts were towed across the harbour from the island of Nou to the quay at Noumea. At five o'clock the convicts were mustered there, and returned to prison. In 1878 I think there were not more than 8,000 convicts in New Caledonia. The lowest sentence of transportation was for seven years, and after that each man had to do his *doublage*—seven years more as a *libéré* under surveillance. Any one who successfully passed through this ordeal would be freed, and allowed to leave for Australian shores. The majority of these convicts were on the island of Nou, others at the *pénitenciers* at Teremba, Bourail, and Canala, and working at the copper mines at Balade, or scattered through the country as assigned servants to settlers. At the *pénitenciers agricoles*, where plots of land were given to good-conduct men, and wives allotted to them, there was, and is, a condition of society as abominable as ever existed in the Cities of the Plain. One cannot to English readers hint at the infamies, which are increasing. It is not many months back since I was on board a French transport, the *Dupuy de Lôme*, which lay alongside the pier at Port Melbourne. Her passengers included some sixty criminal women—young, strong, and healthy; selected on such qualifications from the prisons of France, to be sent to New Caledonia as mates for privileged convicts. That one had killed her husband, this one her lover, another her child. They were mostly murderesses, and one *en voyage* had thrown her baby out of a porthole to die in the sea! What sort of race can be bred up from such parents?

One may get an order to visit the convict depôt, but the officer in charge will not show you much. The different prison houses are well built, and French neatness is perceptible everywhere. There is good land on this island of Nou, and many

convicts work on the farms; others are employed in the stone quarries. But at my visit I did not think any were too hard worked. I cannot forget how a good sister of St. Joseph of Cluny clapped her hands when she heard my bad French, and said, "You are English." This lady was a native of Limerick, and was rejoiced to see one speaking her native tongue. These nuns were nurses in the prison hospital. The convict band was turned out to play for us; and then I interviewed one about to die. Four men had two days before attempted to escape; two were shot dead, and another lay almost dying in the hospital with a bullet through his lungs, nursed as tenderly as a prince by the good sisters of St. Joseph. The fourth was confined in the condemned cell, sentenced to be guillotined on the morrow. "Certainly, Monsieur could see him, if he wished." The door was unlocked, and a youth of about nineteen was discovered reading a pamphlet. "Yes! he knew he was to die on the morrow. It was not amusing, but what would you? It was his bad fortune." Examining the tract, I found that, in good French, the Abbé Segur propounded on the outside the conundrum, "What is Hell?" and inside proceeded to answer it to his own satisfaction. I suggested that this also was not amusing, and that a smoke would do him more good. His eyes brightened at this. Giving him, therefore, two cigars, I placed one in his mouth, and struck a match, with which he lighted it. The *surveillants* who accompanied me made no objection; was I not armed with the passport of *Monsieur le Gouverneur* to see and do what I liked? A great scoundrel he might have been; but condemned to die for an attempt to escape seemed a hard lot, and I thought tobacco might be an antidote to the tract left by the priest. Besides, we are not told that the cup of water should be given only to good children.

When on the slope of the Pic Ouitchambo the gaol-bird whom I christened Montparnasse had boasted of the fear in which his kind were held by the authorities, I thought it very lucky that the Canaques had commenced their insurrection by slaughtering over one hundred convicts. The natives of New Caledonia despise and hate the prisoners. They know that these are degraded whites, and that their own lands were taken to make *pénitenciers* and model farms, and to cut up into homesteads for the *libérés*. But for the natives there might be an attempt to escape *en masse*, which

would be a great danger to the colonies. A few thousand men like Montparnasse would gladly and willingly follow any leader in a raid on Australia. They would be more formidable than any regular troops. After leaving Bouloupari I saw convicts and *libérés* armed and drilled in companies at Teremba, La Foa, Moindou, and Canala. They accompanied the regular troops on marches and forays. Discipline in places was very slack, the only strict regulation being that the *forçats* had to give up their rifles at night. I believe that the convicts plundered many of the houses in the settled districts, from which the inhabitants had fled at the first scare, and also that some of the murders attributed to the Canaques were committed by them. Otherwise whence came the *rouleaux* of gold found on *évadès* who landed in Queensland? One thing I specially noticed at the time. All the convicts marched well, and, but for their clothes, were equal, as in physique they were generally superior, to the young conscripts of the infantry. I do not know that these *Moblots* as a rule did any particular service. They, however, helped to swell the defensive force of the settlements, and to overawe the enemy by the mere display of numbers.

Here, on the island of Nou, one reflected that the danger to Australia was not only in the escape of the convicts (and scores have escaped and landed on our shores), but in the use to which they might be put in time of war. With a very little drilling, *libérés* and convicts could be turned into a fair military force, equal, perhaps, to our militia. In the event of hostilities, what is easier than to ship these by the hundred and thousand to the nearest points of the Australian coast? With arms in their hands, and a French flag to float over them, they would have to fight for their existence, and would kill, plunder, ravish, destroy. Amongst these filibusters some military genius might arise, and entire portions of Australia would be for a time conquered. The scum of Normandy, of Brittany, and Anjou, who followed the Conqueror to England were scarcely a more unpromising lot than the New Caledonian adventurers would be. William Walker ruled Central America with but a handful of desperate white men. With the knowledge that they must conquer or die, these Frenchmen would be highly dangerous, and at the very least they would rob and ravage, and would divert attention from other and more

legitimate operations of our enemies. It may be said that France would hardly arm her convicts against Australia; but all is fair in love and war. I, from a French point of view, think it would be a logical way of utilising them. They would be of service in harassing and damaging us; and if they were all killed off, it would be a saving to France in the future.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### COMMUNISTS IN EXILE.

SOME of the prisoners on the Island of Nou were Communists, sent there for special offences against the government. I was told that they were worse treated than the vilest criminals, but I could not make any particular note of their cases, or inquire into them. It was my duty to the journal I represented to avoid complications. Besides, travelling as I did, on the passport of Governor Olry, I was in honour bound not to take advantage of the kindness and hospitality extended to me. If, however, the gallant sailor who then ruled New Caledonia had known that I was the literary executor of Doctor Felix Rastoul, I reckon I should have had my *congé* for Sydney by the first boat. But signs sometimes escape one, and there is a *rapport* between old conspirators, or it may be that ex-comrades in Noumea had sent the word round. Anyhow, the leaders of the Communist *franc tireurs* I met during the war always seemed to recognise me as their friend, and long after I returned to Australia, Citoyen Amouroux sent me, by the "underground railway," from the prisons in New Caledonia to my address in Sydney, long and interesting accounts of the progress of the war. As I had the key to the cipher and the code of signs used by the prisoners in Ile Nou, communication was easy. Stone walls and iron bars did not keep them from a knowledge of the outer world. When I get letters of this kind, however, I never ask how they reach me. On one occasion I received a request to despatch a cablegram to the late Monsieur Louis Blanc, then one of the deputies for Paris. It was rather an expensive affair, but the exiles appealed trustingly to me, and I could not refuse. But Amouroux having written for the receipt, the amount was recouped; it had been collected *centime* by *centime*, *franc* by *franc*. Grateful people these Communists, after all.

Those who took part in the native war were trusted by the Commandants Rivière and Servan quite as much as the regular

troops. The latter appealed to me on their behalf. I have seldom respected any man more than I did the commandant of Canala. In times of battle, murder, and sudden death, a few weeks, even a few days, are sufficient to cement friendships which, under other conditions, might take years to perfect. When you march and fight and sleep side by side with a man, you soon get to know him. I loved Adea Servan for himself, and for his goodness to me. When we embraced at parting, the least that I could say was that he might call, command, and count on me at any time to aid himself or his friends. I had a letter dated from Canala shortly after I left. Commandant Servan recalled my promise. This, translated, is what he said:—"We never spoke on politics. I have no opinions. I am a Frenchman only. But if it is not against your political opinions, will you say a word on behalf of the *Communards*, my *franc tireurs*. They worked nobly, and endured great sufferings, and deserve some respite. They have offended certainly, but it was but in politics, and they have atoned. I know that all you write is sent to France, and a word from you will have a great effect."

Communists were of various classes. Besides the dangerous scum of society which always rises to the top in any outburst, men of education, learning, genius, enthusiasm, suffered patient exile for devotion to their cause. In the Australian colonies, the popular mind has never been sufficiently instructed as to the difference between Communist and Convict. Political exiles are often confused with convicts, and these latter sometimes gain sympathy under false colours as Communists, and their offences are heralded in the press under such generic designation. It should be remembered that an amnesty has been proclaimed, that whatever offences they committed have been condoned by their country, and the title "Communist" may be held to be on a par with that of "Rebel," or the more vulgar "Secesher," of which no Southern gentleman was ever ashamed.

The true history of the Commune has yet to be written, perchance it never will be published. Few recognise the facts which caused the revolt in Paris, fewer still care to be branded as "Communists" by those to whom the term is held as one of the deepest reproach. It meant in 1871, and to a certain extent does so still, according to the theory of the day, "a man cruel,

debauched, idle, atheistic; at war with art, at war with property, at war with religion, at war with all the truths of God and the best interests of society." This was the language of a popular preacher, who probably knew as little of the principles of the Paris Commune, and the aims and acts of its leaders, as he did of that state of society under the Empire which made Cora Pearl and the *chiffonnière* possible. The press and the pulpit circulated one-sided reports in reference to this struggle—reports which are often still received as absolute truth, and a *Communard* is considered to be the same thing as a Socialist. The many gentlemen who were connected with the Commune, and who are now honoured citizens of France, would laugh to scorn the idea of being Socialists. Amongst these I may mention the name of M. Camille Barrère, now representative of France in Egypt, who is an elegant English scholar and *littérateur*, and who during his career as a journalist in London made many friends.

On the 21st of May, 1871, the troops of the Versailles government entered Paris, and the Commune fell. For a week there was a saturnalia of blood. Neither age nor sex were spared. In the city, in the Bois de Boulogne, and at Sartory, it is computed that over 20,000 victims were sacrificed by the party of Law and Order. Never in modern times was such a fearful retribution dealt out to the vanquished in a civil outbreak. Thousands were arrested and tried by the *conseils de guerre*. Some few were acquitted, many sentenced *passer par les armes*, others consigned to the galleys for life, or to *déportation*. Before the court martial it was a toss up whether a Communist would be shot, condemned to prison, or simple exile. I know a case of three brothers who equally participated in the Paris rebellion. One was executed, one sent to the convict prison on Ile Nou, the third consigned to the Communist settlement on the Presqu'île Ducos, the peninsula which forms one side of the harbour of Noumea.

This latter territory, which the political prisoners could call their own, all of the world which they would ever henceforth see, was about seven miles long, with a width of barely two miles, surrounded on three sides by the waters, where gunboats were stationed to prevent escape or communication. On the fourth side of this peninsula a mountain range marked the line beyond which no *déporté* could pass. Here was the residence of the commandant, the barracks, and a fortified blockhouse containing two pieces of

cannon. A telegraph wire connected the *poste* with Noumea. Mounted *gens d'armes* patrolled the line of demarcation, and they were assisted by a number of Canaque policemen, who received a small pay, but also a reward of twenty francs for the recapture of any escaped prisoner. Landwards evasion was thus rendered impossible; one could not hope to slip through the fingers of these native sleuth-hounds. The peninsula of Ducos is composed of hills, and the land is not very fertile. In the gorge of the hills was the Communist settlement. The exiles had certain rations of food and supplies of clothing allowed to them. Plots of ground were apportioned to each where they could erect their own dwellings, and which they could cultivate if they so wished. The produce of their labour was disposed of by a special Government agent. In any necessary public works on the peninsula, the *détenues* would be employed at a rate, not so high as that of labour in the colonies, but sufficient to enable them to earn a few francs weekly to provide extra wine and tobacco. Here and at the Isle of Pines the French government disbursed thousands of francs monthly for road-making and other works. These were soon spent at the canteens and stores kept by Communists themselves, some of whom made large fortunes out of the work of their brethren in misfortune. Indeed the *déportation* of the Communists to New Caledonia was a source of great profit to the merchants of Noumea, and also to the Australian colonies, whence most of the supplies are obtained. When it is considered that over seven thousand political prisoners were sent out, that their wives and families often followed them, and that, irrespective of the great amount spent by the government, many of the exiles were provided with money and would have sums, large or small, sent to them by their friends, it is not to be wondered at that the *déportation* was very popular amongst the traders of Noumea, and that business was for a time very flourishing there.

If one had money one need not work. It was necessary for each exile to report his existence at stated times, and there were certain regulations which if he did not follow, imprisonment would be the punishment. It must be remembered that the Communists were under martial law, they were sentenced in Versailles by *conseils de guerre*, and the method of their detention and government was entirely distinct from that of the ordinary

penal settlements in other parts of the island. A refractory Communist exile, or one attempting to escape, might be tried by court martial and executed, or sent to work with the *forçats* on Ile Nou. To those who had friends with whom they could communicate—and "an underground railway" was soon established, by which secret correspondence was kept up with sympathisers with the cause in Europe—to those who had money with which to purchase little necessaries and comforts, and to those who had literary or artistic tastes which they could pursue, there might certainly be a harder existence than life on the Peninsula of Ducos. One had a country of fourteen square miles in which to ramble; there was the earth, the sea, the sky, and the bush, in which to find strange objects of Nature. There was an entire absence of snakes and venomous reptiles, and a climate tropical but not unhealthy. How many people in the crowded cities of the old world never traverse seven miles in their life! Yet the eight to nine hundred Communists, who were at one time on the Peninsula of Ducos, I dare say, found their life miserable enough. Some would be content, their mere animal wants being satisfied; but others of more refined natures would suffer, perchance, from the insolence of office and the pangs of exile; not to speak of that nostalgia which none feel so much as the Parisian. In the words of Victor Hugo:—

"L'exil, c'est la goutte qui tombe,
Et perce lentement et lâchement punit
Un cœur qui le devoir avait fait de granit;
C'est la peine infligée à l'innocent, au juste,
Et dont ce condamné, sous Tarquin, sous Auguste,
Sous Bonaparte, rois et Césars teints de sang,
Meurt, parce qu'il est juste et qu'il est innocent."

In Noumea itself resided many Communists sentenced to simple exile, and not to forced residence within a fortified *enceinte*. Amongst them there was one who has made a great deal of noise in the world. Eight years ago I often saw her—a shabbily-dressed woman, still young, but with no graces of youth, with no attempt at personal adornment, her shoes down at the heel, her hair unkempt—poverty and despair united. As she trudged along, through the rain and the mud, she looked neither to right nor to left; her settled melancholy made her heedless of the men

as of the fashions of the world. But as she passed, many rude workmen doffed their caps and looked after her with affection and esteem. Little children were taught to kiss their hands to this lone woman, with "*Bon jour, Citoyenne Louise!*" For this was Louise Michel, the Communist, the so-called *pétroleuse*, the Woman of the People, whom many thousands of French working men and women looked up to and loved as a second Joan of Arc! Unlovely outwardly, a mad fanatic as we may esteem her, yet the life of Mlle. Michel, in its bravery, endurance, and purity, in the entire abnegation of self, is a striking page in the history of contemporaneous womanhood.

In days long since past I knew "Louise," as in simple republican style we all called her. I know nearly every act of her public career. I know her private life; and I write some defence of an often slandered and misunderstood, albeit mad woman, who for years lived in banishment and alone, earning her bread by teaching the children of the *bourgeoisie*, with no friends but her cats. Louise Michel was brought up in a convent. She early exhibited talents of the very highest order. She was passionately devout, one of the ewe lambs of the Church. Her talents were too brilliant to be buried under the convent bushel. She could do Rome greater service in the world; so she became a "religious teacher" amongst the people. She wrote a volume of sacred poetry, breathing the most devout faith. Great things were expected of her. She was of the stamp of the saints and martyrs of olden time. Who can say when the change first came?—gradually, no doubt, as all great changes of opinion do come. Was it disgust at the human instruments of an infallible Church first led her to doubt that infallibility? We may be sure she fought long and earnestly against it as the prompting of the Evil One. Louise all her life has been noted for her love for her own sex, for her intense sympathy with its wrongs, for her contempt, almost hatred at times, for Man the Strong who oppresses Woman the Weak. She has lived pure as any vestal virgin or saint in the calendar; she has only communed with men in order to effect the emancipation of her own sex. Out in the world Louise could not but see how hardly woman was used; how society, law, and religion, combined to keep her in a subservient state. She became the leader of the working women of Paris. She gave her life to their cause. Not

by any means, though, like the furies of '89, who wore Phrygian caps and posed as heathen goddesses, whom they resembled only in the looseness of their lives. Louise was ever above suspicion. She strove for liberty according to her lights. Her reward was exile in New Caledonia. Then the amnesty came, and she returned to Europe. In France during the last few years Louise has still kept up an agitation. A republic is there, but the awful power of wealth is still as visible as under the empire. In "*Madame Angôt*" the well-known song, "*Jadis les Rois*," expresses the situation now, as at the time it delineates. The poor are still pushed to the wall. Gambetta, like Barras, had wealth and mistresses; but bread was no cheaper in Belleville and Montmartre. Although one cannot endorse the opinions of Louise, one may admire the spirit of the whole-hearted woman who has suffered through her misplaced devotion to the cause of her sex. I am sorry that Louise of late days has become madder than ever, and is now a pronounced Socialist.

The majority of the Communists, however, were kept in a safeguarded exile on the Isle of Pines. Governor Olry gave me an official permission to visit the Isle, and also a letter of recommendation to the hospitality and good offices of the commandant there. I was the only journalist ever allowed to visit this celebrated Communist settlement. How well I remember that first morning ride with the commandant—the immense banyan trees, the coral cave where Dr. Felix Rastoul and his eighteen companions built their frail boat, and the wreck cast up on the beach after they were all drowned. Then the next morning I was up before daylight, and took horse alone and traversed the five different communes into which the settlement was divided. There was a first-class road for some six or seven miles, with many bridle-tracks through the bush. These 4,000 *déportés*, who were in exile there at that time, had not such a bad life of it after all. Many had their wives and families with them. The rations allowed them were sufficient, if not ample, and they need not work unless they liked. But all the roads, and the many excellent buildings and public works on the Isle of Pines, were constructed by them, and the amount paid away in wages by the government was considerable. To enable their comrades to spend this money several opened stores and cabarets, and one, at least, M. Fabre, amassed a large fortune. Plots of land were

allotted to every one, on which they could erect cottages, cultivate gardens, and for miles one saw salad and flower beds. Many had money sent out to them by their friends, and could live a life of luxurious ease, with nothing to trouble them. But in every cottage there seemed to be occupation—cabinet-makers, shoemakers, and a most abnormal number of barbers. I do not think Figaro of Paris is generally ultra-Red; but I imagine the exiles took to shaving and haircutting as a light easy profession, "requiring no previous knowledge." Looking at this peaceful place—women chatting to each other at their doorsteps, little children running around, the ties of family everywhere visible—it was hard to realise that seven years before these men were amongst those who, for two months, held one of the greatest cities of the world against army, society, and wealth.

I am the literary executor of Dr. Felix Rastoul; and some day, when I retire to a well-deserved life of ease and idleness, I intend to write the history of the Commune. "Life on the Isle of Pines" will be a chapter therein. There were many pretty idyls there. Nursing a baby beneath a grenadilla vine was a young lady, whom I had last seen a rising favourite of the opera in Paris. She had abandoned everything to follow her lover, a young journalist. They were happy, happier perhaps than when the amnesty was declared and they returned to Paris. After the first few days of intoxication at being once more in their beloved city, many of the class of the Quartier Latin who assisted in the Commune—young journalists, artists, students of law and medicine—must have found life harder than in the lone isle in the South Pacific. As for the majority of the *ouvrier* class, I think they were really better off in exile, than striving in labour's bitter competition in Paris. They had their amusements in the Isle of Pines—an open-air theatre on Sundays, and a lithographed newspaper with caricatures, appearing bi-weekly. I have preserved numbers of this journal, as equal curiosities of literature with some of the statutes of the Fijian Government, commencing "Cakobau, by the Grace of God and the Will of the People, King."

At the end of the territory allotted to the Communists was the settlement of Gadji, the home of deported Arabs banished to this lone isle for participation in some revolt in Algiers. Highly interesting and poetic-looking individuals, in their long white

*bournous* and turbans of many folds. Morning and evening they turned towards that part of our orbit where they supposed Mecca to be situated, and washed their hands and feet in a little—a very little—water. You thought of Abd-el-Kader and Saladin, and pictured these men, bravest of the brave, careering over the desert sands on fiery steeds of purest blood, fighting to the last against the rule of the Giaour and the advent of the Cross. But I found them to be wretched frauds. During the war a number of these Arab exiles were recruited for active service in New Caledonia. They had the reputation amongst average Frenchmen which the Indians of the plains have with average Americans in the Eastern states—they were fierce, bold, and reckless, and the most daring of riders; they would soon make short work of the foe if let loose on the rebel Canaques! It has already been stated that we had some Arabs with Colonel Wendling's column at Bouloupari. They had huts built especially for, and special rations allotted to them, and were well horsed and armed. The result—they proved themselves arrant "duffers." They could not ride as well as an Australian stockman, and took remarkably good care of their precious skins. They were absolutely useless. But perhaps they had reason: why should they risk shedding their blood for the Feringhee? At the present day these followers of Islam loaf about Noumea, and try to captivate the convict women. Two of them keep a *café*, the resort of all the bad characters in the place. Fancy a "child of the desert" selling rum and absinthe! If he drinks also, he but follows the example of many Commanders of the Faithful, and that much might be forgiven him. But to peddle strong liquor to *libérés* and *filles de marbre*—by the beard of the Prophet, this is indeed a disillusion! Another of the cherished ideals of my boyhood gone, following the Red Indian and the guileless native of the Coral Islands!

There are still many natives in the Isle of Pines, and a Catholic mission station, to which one Sunday I paid a visit with the French commandant. The courteous Marist priests showed one every kindness; they gave me, a heretic, meat and drink and information, but no tracts. They displayed good evidence of their work. The stone church is better than any in New Caledonia. The girls and boys assembled at service were neatly dressed, and sang well. The former, under the control of

some good sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny, were kept in school and taught useful domestic arts. The result of the mission work here was superior to anything I saw in New Caledonia. But the natives of the Isle of Pines are only settlers from the Loyalty Group, and are of a superior type. In the old days they were bold sea corsairs, like the men of Mare and Lifu. Here I saw a remarkably fine double war canoe, with a good-sized house on deck, able to transport a number of warriors. The chief was known as "King Samuel" and his wife as "Queen Hortense," an evidence that she was baptised in the days of the Empire. Their majesties received me most graciously. Their palace was a good house of coral-lime concrete, well-furnished, in the midst of a pretty garden. Hortense was not bad-looking, as royalty goes. Samuel, whom I had previously met in Noumea, and at the government residence, handed me a cigar, and then lighting his own, with true Cuban politeness, passed it to me to take fire from. Their majesties had a slight pension from the French government, and Samuel bossed and received pay for the boat's crews provided for the commandant. I do not think this mission has been established longer than many Protestant ones I have seen in the Western Pacific, and the outward evidences of civilisation were much greater. Two sights struck me specially. One was a woman sitting on the floor in the church with her eyes fixed on the Calvary; mute and motionless, her soul seemed to go out with as intense personal devotion as any Hindoo devotee to Krishna. This, I suppose, was the embodiment of the highest faith; but where is the line to be drawn between faith and superstition? Leaving her in the empty church, I watched the school-girls in their long white dresses filing homewards. Here was the triumph of the new religion; but here also was the heathen remnant. Two or three old men, blear-eyed, toothless, rapidly approaching the "last stage of all," crouched round a fire, and vaguely looked at the white dresses and the black-robed priests. They could not realise the change from the days when they were mighty warriors, man-slayers, and man-eaters.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### NOUMEA REVISITED.

ONE June afternoon I was sitting after lunch in a hostelry at Rosstown, on the west coast of New Zealand. It was approaching mid-winter. I had crossed the mountains between Christchurch and Hokitika, and through the Otira Gorge, in a heavy snowstorm, having to be dug out from the box-seat on the coach. With some good friends I had driven from Hokitika, twenty miles through primal forest, to inspect new and flourishing gold mines at Rosstown. But where there is a telegraph office, a newspaper correspondent is never safe. A message from my chief in Melbourne, which had followed me from Canterbury to Westland, was handed to me in this mining village: "Please go to Sydney at once." I made all speed to Auckland, thence by the magnificent Union Steamship Company's boat *Manipouri* to Port Jackson. There my editor and very dear friend met me on board. "I want you to go to New Caledonia and the New Hebrides," said he. "The Messagerie steamer *Dupleix* starts to-morrow. The missionaries say the French are attempting to annex the islands. Find out all about it, and come back in a 'labour vessel' if you can." And, so after an absence of four years, I revisited Noumea, in a fortnight exchanging the view of eternally snow-capped mountains and enormous glaciers for coral reefs and cocoa-nut palms.

It was as familiar as if I had left it only yesterday—the outer circle of the coral reef, Ile Nou, a second barrier, forming the bay; red hills, tinted with the verdancy of spring vegetation, in the background; a goodly town sloping upward from the beach. The *tricolor* of France everywhere, soldiers everywhere, convicts everywhere, blacks everywhere. It is the greatest possible change an Australian can have. In five days from Sydney he lands in a foreign country, under foreign laws; he listens to a foreign language, and lives according to foreign habits. It is an education for our native born, and I recommend every one who

can afford it—and it costs no more than a trip from one of our great centres to another—to come here once: perhaps they will not care about a second visit. My way was made smooth on the *Dupleix*, the magnificent accommodation of which, and the courtesy of the *commandant* and *commissaire*, made me regret that I should not return by the same route.

Noumea had not altered; or if so, not for the better. It was certainly nice to be once more in a tropical country, to see the cocoa-nut and the banana flourish. It was nice to be in a country where they lived sensibly, according to the climate. It was nice to be waited on by members of "an inferior race," who had not the slightest desire to give their employers "warning," even if they could, for they knew very well they were a thousand times better off here than in their native islands. It was nice once more to mingle with "the most polite nation on the face of the earth." It was nice to see all the bravery of uniform on every side, to have men with one, or two, or three *galons* clinking glasses with you; mere *pékins* obtaining a sort of reflected grandeur in this. Yet, somehow, I had lately changed my opinions as to the quality of this French politeness—as to whether, after all, it was worth anything—whether, like that of the Japanese, it was not all veneer—whether it was not in many cases as a mass of corruption, covered with a gorgeous *tricolor* which one was called upon to admire. Have I changed that I should feel like this? I, whose dearest friends are of France; I, who have fought for it, and spent many days of happiness and sorrow there! Or have the French people here changed? Have they become contaminated by the convict atmosphere, or association with Englishmen and Australians, who are daily increasing in number in New Caledonia?

Certainly, the leading representatives of the foreign element in Noumea were not those one would set up as the pink of fashion and the mould of form. There were a few staunch Britishers, men who in any part of the world would be respected. The majority, however, reminded me of the story of the western emigrant, who wrote to his father, "Dad, come out quick; the meanest kind of men get office here!" "The meanest kind of men" get along in Noumea. It has been the Alsatia for absconding priests, card-sharpers, fraudulent bankrupts, forgers, and such. One would imagine they would be wary of coming where

the evidences of convicted crime were for ever before them. But until very recently there was such scant communication with the Australian colonies; even in Sydney so little was known of this place, that a man, once in New Caledonia, felt himself safe; and so many of them have stopped and prospered. True, I missed the handsome face of that genial English priest, a charming companion, who built more houses in Sydney with other people's money than any living contractor. He had vanished to the States and the stage. But I also missed dear friends, well-known in the streets of Noumea—Henri Rivière had been martyred in Tonquin. Where, too, was the figure of Adea Servan, the hero of the war, whose brotherly care "in the midst of battle, murder, and sudden death," I shall never forget? His vessel ploughed the western ocean, and but a short time before he had obtained fresh honours for saving lives at sea. He deserves all the world can give him.

Gallant Governor Olry also was in Noumea no longer; he was replaced by one of the stamp of those who are "undecidedly right"—who wish to do good and great things, but vacillate, and do them the wrong way. Monsieur Pallu de la Barrière posed as a friend of humanity; he endeavoured to ameliorate the condition of the convicts; he called them "my poor ones." He weakened the iron hand within the velvet glove which rules in French penal establishments. Consequently, the country was full of escaped convicts; no less than twelve were arrested in the streets of Noumea on the occasion of the *fêtes* of the 14th of July. Like all weak men, the governor was tyrannous at times. He had power to dispense with the services of any one who offended him, so he had sent to France the Director of the Interior; and, Monsieur Bascans, a popular and brave officer, was also to be returned. It was proposed by the masonic lodges of which M. Bascans was a member to give him a farewell banquet. The governor caused it to be intimated that any one who dared to attend this would feel his public and private displeasure on every occasion—consequently, there was no speeding to the parting guest.

The *déportés* had nearly all returned to France. I believe they included some of the most respectable inhabitants in Noumea. Citizen Amouroux, captain of the *franc tireurs* of Canala, now holds place in Paris. There were still some well-known faces,

however—faces which I saw beforetime in Paris, in the Isle of Pines, or the Presqu'île Ducos. That highly respectable citizen, inclined to *embonpoint*, who followed the peaceful calling of a soda-water manufacturer, did not come up to the popular notion of a Communist. But he made his record! M. Mourot, on the contrary, proprietor of the *Progrès*, did resemble a typical revolutionary journalist. His big, shaggy head, the eyes flashing behind glasses, the mobile mouth, the general uncouthness, and yet the sense of power in the man—he was a type. Rochefort's ex-secretary on the *Lanterne* was at this time, I fear, a little *réactionnaire*. It is true he abused the Marist Brothers and the Church generally; but that is always a safe line in a French colony. There, where the army is all-powerful, the Church is despised. The officers treat the priests with disdain. During my stay in New Caledonia five years ago, I never saw a priest inside the residence of any of the commandants, or heard of any of the officers going to church, or visiting the Brothers. Mourot was posing as a patriot. England and the Australian colonies were alike perfidious in his eyes. Mourot mocked himself of them. If the governor, friend of humanity and the convict, would but follow Mourot's advice, there would be war in a week. Mourot had taken the governor under his special protection; which must have been rather amusing for the governor. Mourot's idea was that New Caledonia should become a vast arsenal from whence all the isles of the Pacific should be domineered, and a perpetual watch kept on the offspring of perfidious Albion in Australia. Mourot was a clever man, and a hospitable *confrère*. Years ago he gave me some beautiful verses on Liberty and Exile, full of denunciations of all the powers, past, present, and future. This time he read me no verses, but asked me to dinner; and in his writings supported the administration and flattered the popular vanity. If there was one idea of the Communists more developed than another, it was that the lust for military glory and acquisition of territory had been the cause of all the misfortunes of France in late days. Hence, the Vendôme column, as perpetuating these, was pulled down. Mourot, judging by his writings, was no more a Communard.

I missed "Cousine," wife of the *déporté* who kept a first-class *café*. She was "Cousine" to you, to me, to every one *comme il faut*, a smart Frenchwoman, full of wit and repartee. Gone, too, was

the *café* where on Sunday evenings the Communists assembled and drank their frugal *bocks* of colonial beer. Well do I remember having visited it one night, when an ex-admiral of the Commune (he commanded a gun-boat on the Seine), a young Provençal, full of fire and energy, stood on the table and sang the Marseillaise. Now the Rue d'Alma was given up to English hotels and English barmaids. I cannot say I thought this an improvement; with my American notions, I do not like barmaids. But if the exigencies of circumstances do force a young girl behind a bar, there is no reason why she should not be treated decently, and with the respect every man ought to show to every woman. I would warn every girl not to go to Noumea. She cannot retain any decency or self-respect there. The manner in which the French officers treated the poor girls in the hotels, the language they addressed to them in French, which their victims could not at first understand, was a revelation to me, and caused me to doubt the intrinsic value of French politeness. As that tall American captain said to me, "For their own manhood's sake, you cannot understand officers and gentlemen talking like this." I have seen something of the low life of Paris; I have been to students' and working people's balls and *fêtes*; but I never heard anything worse than the impurities uttered by some of the one, two, and three *galon* men who went to the English houses in Noumea. The barmaid system appeared to have developed all that was worst in their natures, and their stripes, apparently, were considered a permit to enable them to insult every one with impunity.

Outside Noumea, in the "Quartier Latin," in the Valley of the Colonists, and towards the charming retreat of the English consul, there was a great improvement. New roads had been made, more private houses had been built, which, embosomed in the luxuriance of tropical gardens, evidenced the increasing wealth of the people. And on Thursdays and Sundays, when the convict band played in the Square of the Cocoa-nuts, the stranger would certainly imagine that Noumea was a very wealthy place. It is only in a French colony that one would see a sight like this. The square was surrounded by a double row of cocoa-nut trees, of a good height and age, affording shelter to promenaders. There were grassy lawns, intersecting walks, convenient seats. In the centre a kiosk, where the band from the prison at Ile Nou dis-

coursed music superior to anything to be now heard south of the line. There were several owners of French titles, ex-officers, and one priest, in this band, which all Noumea turned out to hear. There were well-appointed carriages and buggies, good horses, fashionably-dressed women, children decked out in the most ultra fashion-book style. The juvenile population of Noumea was very large. In a few years it will be full of marriageable young women. There were uniforms everywhere, from one to five stripes. There was the celebrated duellist, only a two-stripe officer, who had killed or wounded his seven men in two years. Here was a notorious young Russian, a fine musician, and his companion and racing partner, who bore a name well-known in colonial politics. Here were the brothers O'Donoghue, who had got stout and wealthy since we were on the war-path together, and one said, as he hurried to the front, "Jack, don't you leave the Doctor." It was a touch of a white man's nature, surrounded as we were by savage allies, which I shall never forget. There was a tall gentleman, grave and reserved; he was inspector or auditor-general, and relieved his mind from cares of figures by pensively playing the flageolet for seven hours during the day and night. As he always played one tune, and beat time with his foot, it was pleasant for those who occupied the room under him. For my sins, I did so for a time. I hurled denunciations upwards which, if heard, had not the slightest effect. I believe he thought I was English, and that he was avenging Waterloo! A few Arabs, *déportés* from Algiers, native police, *libérés*, and South Sea Islanders of a hundred different types and tongues, all happy, all laughing, "victims" of the labour traffic though they were, made a kaleidoscope in the Place of the Cocoa-nuts well worth seeing and studying.

How was all this apparent wealth kept up? The convicts and the soldiers may be said to make Noumea. Take away these, and the millions of francs annually disbursed by France on their account, besides the small amounts which the privates and officers spend in the town, and half the people here would be bankrupt. The return of the Communist *déportés* has been a great blow to the traders of New Caledonia. But on the other hand, the transportation has increased. There are now, as far I can learn, nearly 20,000 convicts on the island; and there are soldiers and *surveillants* in proportion. The prisons and the

*pénitenciers* are overstocked. There is room for no more here. The natives have been banished to the Isle of Pines, and driven to the hills, and their best lands taken from them; but still there is a necessity for more soil, for concessions to be given to the *libérés* and their sweet wives. The traders, too, want to extend their operations. In the old days some very nice things were made in the contract line; but now this is considerably cut up. Fortunes have been made in cattle raising, which is still, perhaps, the most lucrative and certain source of income. The island trade naturally is of some importance, and the mining interest is being vastly developed. Not only nickel and copper, but chrome and cobalt, are being largely exported. The development of the latter is due to the energy of Messrs. David Storer and Son, of Glasgow. Smelting works are established a few miles from the town, and coke ovens have also been erected. A gas company is being formed in Sydney, and outwardly Noumea is progressing. But I think much of this is mere display. There is a good deal of the *parvenu* about its merchants. They talk big, but they are hanging on for the transportation of the *récidivistes* and the money which will be then spent here. But connected with this is the question of the annexation of the New Hebrides; and the traders will work night and day, and every influence was and will be brought to bear, both in New Caledonia and in France, to hoist the *tricolor* over those islands.

It is a strange fact, that whilst the Protestant missionaries in the New Hebrides were loudly raising their voices against French interference with their rights, in the shape of a possible inroad of Catholic priests, it was from the Catholic Bishop of Noumea, *in partibus infidelium*, that I first obtained information on the *récidiviste* question. The difference between Monsignor Fraysse, as a representative of Rome, and a Protestant missionary, is very great. The former works ever silently, the latter generally with much glorification of the "cause." Many very good people derive all their ideas of foreign lands from the platform of Exeter Hall, and country chapel tea-meetings, where evangelist lions from the four quarters of the globe give interesting accounts of the perils they have undergone, and the number of souls they have snatched from "error's chain." Children would be apt to form contemptuous notions of the doings of the Apostles, after listening to the modest records of

these good men. The missionaries have had the chief share in the literature descriptive of the Cannibal Islands, and have been able to recount the good their particular societies have effected, and the vileness of the Kanaka nature in its unregenerate state. But of New Caledonia the Protestant societies are silent. The Church of Rome is supreme there.

Rome is everywhere well served, and her instruments well chosen :—The genial Irish priest for Australian gold-fields, a great factor at elections; the refined Englishman for the metropolis; the meek Marist Brothers, who require little culture and knowledge of the world, of which in the coral lands they are generally very ignorant, for cannibal savages in the Pacific. How well I remember that the good *père* at the Rewa refused to talk of anything but his beloved France, and the doings of Gambetta and the Commune, of which he imagined the ex-Dictator to be a leader. In China and Japan the members of the Society of Jesus are the chosen weapons. Highly educated, scientists, with keen, subtle, cultured wits—gentlemen above all—they are fitted to cope with the philosophic followers of Confucius and the believers in the transcendental virtues of Buddha, and to meet argument by argument, and not take refuge in an unmeaning shibboleth of religious phrases, which forms nearly the whole arsenal of Protestant holy controversy. Allied to them are the Lazarists and Sisters of Mercy; these show the doctrine of good works, display the universal charity, the human side of Christianity. Even the Protestants admit the superior learning of the Jesuits. As regards the work done by the Catholic missionaries in the Pacific, I remember the testimony of the Rev. Lorimer Fison, of the Wesleyan Mission, who, from a worldly point of view, had not himself too enviable a post. "If ever men lead self-sacrificing, devoted lives, subsisting on the merest pittance, deprived of all the comforts of life, void of all light and sweetness in their hard toiling career, they are the Marist Brothers." This admission was as honourable to Mr. Fison, as it was a wonderful testimony to the priests of a conflicting creed. In New Caledonia the Marist Brothers are not much honoured by their fellow compatriots; but Bishop Fraysse is a general favourite, as he deserves to be. I remain greatly indebted to the bishop for his kind reception, and the clear explanation of the *récidiviste* question in its bearings on New Caledonia and Australia.

## CHAPTER XV.

### RÉCIDIVISTES.

We sat in the Bishop's study, a plainly-furnished apartment, such as became the head of a body of poor missionaries. M. Fraysse was a merry gentleman, whose poetic vivacity of manner showed that he came from the south. In five years he had not changed one day. Like all Provençals, he was a gentleman fond of talking, and on this occasion I was only too glad to listen to him.

"And so," said the Bishop, "your good Protestants in Victoria think that *we* want to take possession of the New Hebrides, to send our Brothers there in opposition to your missionaries? Ah! you are all wrong. We have as much to do in New Caledonia as is possible. And, see you, the authorities here would not stir in our favour. I am sorry that we have often been unfairly treated by the Administration in New Caledonia. We have hard work with the Canaques here. You remember what I told you five years ago? Our great hope is in rearing up the children. The fathers and mothers are received into the Church, and they are baptised. You may tell me that they are still ignorant savages. But the change is in their spirit. One cannot expect great things outwardly from them; it would be impossible. But we take their children away from savage associations, and we bring them up and teach them to wear decent clothes, to read and write in French, the girls to sew, the boys to work, so that when they marry they will lead a decent life, and their children, whom we will also take and bring up, are likely to be civilised, even from your worldly point of view. It is only a question of time. That is the policy of our society everywhere—faith and work and obedience to the laws of the Church as instilled through God's Vicar here on earth," and the Bishop here pointed to a quill, which, mounted in a carved frame, was announced to have been once used by Pius IX. "All the energies of our Church," he continued,

"are required in New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands. The work will soon bear fruit here. The people, I think, will be cannibals no more. But in the New Hebrides they are quite savages. We should have to commence there *de novo;* and the Protestants having been established there for some years, we will leave the field to them. Ah, no! my friend, you in Australia are quite wrong. It is not the Church of Rome which wishes these islands to be annexed to France; it is a company of commercial adventurers here who would extend their operations, and make money out of the transportation of the *récidivistes.* Your Protestant missionaries have a fear of a few poor Marist Brothers. But what will they say when 60,000 of the worst of France are let loose in the islands, like wild birds within the cage, in which they will beat their wings and destroy any tame doves there may be. I think your Protestants would prefer to have as neighbours a few priests of the Church, instead of these hundreds and thousands of *récidivistes.* Do you not know of the Bill which is being introduced into the Senate? I tell you that to send these men here will be a curse to the Pacific. They and their women will bring up families who are never to be allowed to return to France, but will go to your shores of Australia. You Protestants have to fight, not our poor brethren, but the French Government, which is being moved by the adventurers of commerce."

For the first time I heard of the New Hebrides Company of New Caledonia, the leading spirit in the promotion of which was Mr. John Higginson. He is an Englishman, a native of Bedfordshire, who has resided in New Caledonia for many years, has been connected with all the commerce and all the exploitation of mines in this island, and was a partner with the late Sir William Morgan, at one time Premier of South Australia, and, from his influence, and the wealth which he controlled, was reputed to have a great deal more power than many of the governors themselves. Mr. Higginson in 1876 received *lettres de grande naturalisation.* He is more French than Frenchmen. He has lately made a figure in Paris, and has become a partner of the Rothschilds, those princes of finance having advanced funds to exploit the mines and commerce of New Caledonia, taking, it is said, a third share in all Mr. Higginson's undertakings. They have an agent in Noumea who is viewed with

more awe than the governor. Certainly Mr. John Higginson, the ex-country lad of Hitchin, is a wonderful man. M. Rivière compared him with truth to Mires.

The New Hebrides Company I found out was acquiring land in all the islands of the New Hebrides, and purchasing any "stations" which might have been established by Englishmen, and also running vessels which, bearing the French flag, were absorbing all the trade of the islands. But, as the Bishop and others told me, the grand *coup* which was to be effected was in the fact that, if the New Hebrides were annexed, and the *récidivistes* transported thither at the rate of thousands per annum, the Company, owning the sites at all the principal ports, would sell their land to France. Besides, the Company would be in a position to obtain all the contracts for the supply of necessaries to the *transportés*. The authorities in New Caledonia had supported the proceedings of this Company, in allowing an officer of a man-of-war to proceed with its agents, and give official character to acquisitions of land from the natives. At the same time, various presumed coigns of vantage were purchased from the natives on behalf of the French Government. The administration supported the New Hebrides Company, from the idea that if French private interests became powerful in the islands, the English traders and sailors being "run off," it would easily lead to their annexation.

The managing director of the New Hebrides Company was Mr. John Morgan, a native of Adelaide, and a nephew of the late Sir William Morgan. Mr. John Morgan was a young gentleman who had been from his boyhood in New Caledonia in association with Mr. Higginson. The two names to "conjure by" in this French possession were those of Higginson and Morgan, both owned by British-born subjects! I thought it my duty to interview Mr. John Morgan, and obtain his view of the situation.

Mr. John Morgan, in answer to my question, said, "The New Hebrides Company is a perfectly legitimate trading society, properly registered, and protected by French laws. It was formed for the purpose of keeping the island trade, and developing the same in connection with Noumea. With this view, as trade follows the flag, I say frankly I desire the annexation of the islands by France. It would certainly be to our disadvan-

tage for them to be attached to the colonies, if Sir Arthur Gordon's treatment of the Fijian planters is any criterion as to how our claims would be acknowledged. But as a French Company, we expect France, under any circumstances, would protect our interests. I wish it to be clearly understood that I am a naturalised French citizen; and the English authorities in the Western Pacific cannot touch me. We have very large interests with the islands now, and shall extend our operations. There is no more reason why we should not acquire land than the speculators in the suburbs of Sydney and Melbourne. It has all been legitimately acquired. We gave Captain Macleod £5,000 for his interests in Sandwich Island. The natives have had a fair consideration for what we have bought from them; quite as much as the missionaries ever gave for their lands. We have not the slightest wish to interfere with the missionaries; but they appear to wish to keep all white men but themselves away. You will hear their story, of course. You see what their supporters say in Exeter Hall. Ask Captain Macleod about the doings of the vessel owned by —— and Co., of Auckland. It came consigned to us here, laden with gin and muskets to trade with the natives, on behalf of a firm the senior partner of which, as you know, is one of the shining lights of Exeter Hall. If the ship had been owned by Higginson and Morgan, and had floated the French flag, I suppose you would have raised a cry against it. I've no sentiment in this matter. It is a matter of business; and I am justified in adopting means to advance the interests of a Company in which I personally have a very large stake, and of which I am the managing director."

A perfectly legitimate—though perhaps smart piece of trading—transaction this. But the objection I urged then and now, as regards Australian interests, was that it was not entirely as *boná fide* as it looked. The *récidivistes,* if sent to the New Hebrides, would, according to the statement of a shareholder of the Company to me, furnish labourers for the plantations, help to fight the natives, and clear away the original occupiers of the land bought by the Company, and who, perhaps, if possession were taken, would not be ready to part with the fertile spots which they had nominally disposed of for so much tobacco or beads or calico. "Also," said the shareholder, "perhaps 25 per

cent. of the *récidivistes* will escape to Australia; but whether they work for us, are killed by the natives or by fever, or go to your shores, we shall make money out of the transportation; for a good many million of francs will have to be spent by France before their landing in the New Hebrides, and before they can be settled."

It is certain that New Caledonia cannot accommodate any more convicts, or the number of *récidivistes* still proposed to be sent to the Southern Pacific. English people who do not read blue-books may not know what a *récidiviste* is. A *récidiviste* is the "habitual criminal" of France; one who may not have been guilty of any great crime, such as murder, but who spends his life between prison and petty offences. He is an outlaw of society, the scum which floats on the surface of civilisation. The criminals at present in New Caledonia, and of whom I have written so strongly, are bold robbers and murderers. The *récidiviste* halts short of anything which may bring his neck to the guillotine. But he is none the less dangerous. He and his kind are to be sent out to the New Hebrides, male and female, to breed and bring up children—children who will be free, but who will never be allowed to return to France. That, I understand, is the law. Where, then, are they to go but to our shores of Australia? It is against this that we have protested; and it is against this that I hope we shall continue to protest, until the adjacent islands of the Pacific fall under the English flag.

Mr. John Morgan, it will be seen, was very bitter indeed against missionaries. I have no doubt that the commercial policy of Higginson and Morgan, pursued in the South Seas, has often deservedly met with great opposition from the Protestant brethren established there. But, on the other hand, Bishop Fraysse, the Marist, was as strongly opposed as any Presbyterian to the proposed action of the authorities in the introduction of *récidivistes*. According to his point of view, which I thoroughly agreed with, such a population would be worse than the original cannibal one. I trust I may never be sent to chronicle the doings of the *récidivistes* in the South Seas. The convicts in New Caledonia are already sufficiently a danger to Australia. They are now also a danger to the settlers in New Caledonia, who prefer natives of the New Hebrides as servants.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE "LABOUR" QUESTION IN NEW CALEDONIA.

THERE are about 2,500 natives of the New Hebrides, indentured servants, employed in New Caledonia in various capacities, as domestic servants, as labourers in the stores and on the wharves of Noumea, in the coffee plantations, and at the mines. Added to these, there are "Malabars," natives of the Loyalty Islands, and other New Hebrideans, who will not return to their native homes. The Canaque, with his foot on his native heath, will not work. A truly noble savage in his contempt for bodily exertion of a useful sort, he prefers looking on whilst his wives plant the yam and taro. The institution of polygamy in the Pacific is one honoured amongst the males, not so much from a sensual instinct, as from the fact that the possession of a number of wives implies the possession of a number of labourers, and consequent wealth and importance. It is this which makes missionary enterprise so hard there. I remember, five years ago, when Adea Servan and myself followed the example of Joshua, and divided the captive women and children—husbands and fathers all killed—amongst our native allies, that Paul (a young chief belonging to the mission of Nicketty) put in a claim for an extra wife. Paul was a good Catholic, and wore the cross round his neck; but he would not understand that he could not follow the example of his fathers. He had three wives already; the fourth he selected was an old woman, whom others of less experience would have passed by; but Paul saw in her material for a first-rate yam planter and household slave.

There is only one form in which the aborigine of New Caledonia can be utilised, and that is as a native policeman. The streets of Noumea are full of these. Clad in blue pants and blouses, with feathers in their woolly hair, they swagger along, heavy clubs swung over their shoulders, the terror of labour boys and *libérés*. In Fiji you also find the native police, who are recruited from Tonga, and are greater bullies than those

of New Caledonia. They are clad, however, only in a *sulu*, and they do not speak a word of English! When I heard that these had authority and dominion over white men, I was astonished. I put it to Mr. William Seed, the late (but not lamented) superintendent of police in Levuka: "I am a stranger here. I commit unconsciously some offence in your regulations. A half-naked savage seizes me; he threatens me with his club. What do I do?" "You submit," was the reply. "I reckon not," said I, "so long as there is a shot left in my revolver." "You will be hanged, then," said the governor's William. "We will risk it, anyhow." I was not molested in Fiji. But in New Caledonia the native policemen speak French, having acquired it in the missions or amongst the settlers in the bush. They are not likely, either, to molest you or I, who do not belong to the criminal class. They are smart, these Canaques, and know their men. A drunken *libéré* they will "run in" with little ceremony, and they are sometimes pretty hard upon a labour boy. But the reign of law is ostensibly impartial. A great lesson for all the labourers of the other islands is that they see white and black are punished alike for offences. Outwardly there is no distinction between race or colour—the calaboose is for drunkards and thieves of all sorts.

The natives of the Loyalties are superior to any in Western Polynesia. They are magnificent sailors, and are much employed on the coasting vessels and in the inter-insular trade. In old days they were the terror of the Canaques of New Caledonia. They were like the Danes and Norsemen in their system of ravaging. Now they are all Christians, being pretty equally divided into Protestant and Catholic. The *odium theologicum* is strong within them, and they prove the orthodoxy of their religion by blows a great deal stronger and more efficacious than that dealt by the Apostle Peter. The Maré boys are the best looking, resembling the best Fijian type; they are smart and active, and have a bright intelligent appearance, far superior to the New Hebridean. Loyalty natives are employed on the land in New Caledonia, but they are distinct from the ordinary labour boys, as they make their own contracts, or their chiefs do for them, and will only work for comparatively short terms, six months or a year. I saw a batch of boys from Lifu paid off at the office of the Director of the Interior. They had been engaged

on the cattle stations of Messrs. O'Donoghue, at wages of 25 francs or £1 a month, with a liberal supply of rations. £12 a year and everything found would be considered very good wages for a farm servant in England. With these men was a powerfully-made but sad-looking individual in full European costume. His shaved lip and sober appearance made him look like one of the negro preachers so plentiful "down South." I christened him "Uncle Tom." But his pensive appearance was a delusion and a snare. He sat down in the office with his hat on, evidently considering himself a greater man than any of us. Then he looked sadly at the men, and as the dollars were handed to them they all came and placed much silver in his hands.

"That," said my *cicerone* to me, "is Bulla, the great chief of Lifu, who can just raise his finger and 2,500 warriors will follow him to the field."

Until the finger-raising operation occurred, Bulla was fulfilling the duties of his rank by acting as his own tax collector. As the dollars were dropped into his hand, he looked mournful, as one who would say, "Alas! I am getting too much of a Christian to fight, but I must maintain the position of my father. It is very sad that I have to do it in this way." But the money was pocketed quickly enough. I think that Bulla was a wretched old humbug. He wasn't going to do any fighting and risk the lives of his men, when he could take tax and toll of all their earnings with official cognisance. That night I saw him again, in one of the hotels where officers most do congregate. He had been drinking freely, and when one of the members of the superior French race told him to quit, he only looked pensive, and said, "Try and turn me out." No one undertook the contract.

The Loyalty boys nearly all speak English, and perfectly understand the value of money. When they have completed a job they go and deposit their dollars in the safe of some merchant they trust, until they have made up their minds to judiciously invest it in the personal coverings which are as purple and fine linen to them. Far different to the above are the natives of the New Hebrides. They have nothing to do with making the contracts with their employers. For plantation work in Queensland and Fiji, the labourers from these islands have always been considered the very best. A recent report of the Planters' Association of Hawaii also says, "the natives of the New Hebrides have proved to be the

best of field hands, and it is to be regretted that so few have been brought here." Everywhere there is a demand for them, and the supply is not equal to the demand. The "labour" trade was commenced in New Caledonia in the old days, when, according to the testimony of Mr. John Higginson, the system of recruiting was carried on so economically that hands could be supplied at a cost of £1 a head. There is no record as to the exact system pursued by Mr. John Higginson, but men of the stamp of "Bully" Hayes then sailed out of Noumea. At that time there was no Government inspection either from Queensland, Fiji, or the French colony. Of late years, however, the supervision here has been as strict as from the English colonies. With every labour vessel a Government agent was despatched, to whom the owners had to pay £20 a month, counted there a magnificent salary. As on English vessels, he was supposed to witness all engagements made by the captain or supercargo, and the fact of his presence was held to be sufficient to insure the perfect legality of the transactions, and to be a proof that no underhand means were used in perfecting the said engagements. As on English vessels, it was said, however, that the result of the Government agents' work was sometimes not altogether satisfactory. Of the treatment of the natives in the islands by vessels carrying the French flag, the consensus of evidence shows that it is hard and stern; all throughout the Western Pacific the *Kai-wee-wee* (Frenchmen) are hated; the difference between them and the Englishmen, between the *tricolor* and the Union Jack, is well known. On the other hand, one hardly ever heard of the massacre of the crew of a French vessel, any such outrages having been speedily avenged. France is feared if not loved. In Fiji, in Queensland, and in New Caledonia, master mariners have always told me that the English flag is the worst a man can sail under in the South Seas, and that of late years the natives imagined they could beard it with impunity. From the point of view of white men's lives, it is certain that the French system has been the best. "When you read in missionary books that the niggers don't know the difference between white men, don't you believe it," said Captain —— to me. "They know the difference between a *Kai-wee-wee* and myself as well as you do. They know I've always traded fair and the Frenchman has been d——d cruel to them. But they know that if, in one of their sudden fits of passion or covetous-

ness, which nobody can account for, they should loot my ship and kill the crew, the chances are nothing would be done. But if they killed a Frenchy, the village and the island would smart for it."

Safely recruited, the labourers were landed at Noumea, marched in gangs to the verandah of the owners' store, and there left for the inspection of intending purchasers until the sale commenced. I say "purchasers" and "sale" advisedly, for the transaction was as openly and avowedly a sale as anything to be seen in the old days "down South." Five years ago I was present one afternoon in the warehouse of Messrs. Rataboul and Puech. Native men and women and young boys hanging about apathetically, all clad in one garment supplied by the owners to prevent any offence against French "decency." Most of the adults smoking. All the "stock" in good condition. Entered a smart active gentleman, well-known in Sydney and Melbourne. "I want a boy for my house, B——," said he to the thick-set, black-bearded, straw-hatted bookkeeper, who might have played the part of the auctioneer in the "Octoroon" without any make-up.

"That lot up there ain't sold," said the good-natured factotum; "there's one little fellow can speak English."

Then my friend examined the "little fellow" as a veterinary surgeon would a horse. He looked at his legs, and paid special attention to the glands of his throat. Some bargaining took place, and in the end 100 francs (£4) was given for the boy of fourteen, who thenceforward became the slave for three years of his purchaser. All engagements of island labour were of this nature, the prices given varying according to the value of the "stock" —sometimes running as high as £12, the average of later years being about £7. The "purchase" completed, the legal formality of engagement was gone through at the office of the Director of the Interior. All particulars were inserted in two little books, the *Livret d'engagé* and the *Bulletin d'immatriculation*. Each contained the number, name, place of birth, age, and personal description of the indentured servant, and the particulars of what the employer agreed to furnish. The first three items were lodging, medical care, and interment. Afterwards the rations were specified, which, at the discretion of the employer, were biscuit, maize, rice, yams, taro, fresh and salt fish and meat, vegetables, and salt.

As a matter of fact, the labourers were fed well, irrespective of any ration scale. It would not be to the benefit of the employers to starve them. All throughout New Caledonia the labour boys were in good condition, sleek, and after the manner of their kind, happy. The employer had also to yearly furnish to the males two shirts, two pairs of pants, and two handkerchiefs; to the females, two chemises, two gowns, and four handkerchiefs.

The minimum monthly wages fixed by Government for new hands were:—Boys and girls, under 14 years, 6f. a month; under 17, boys 9f., girls 7½f.; over 18, males 12f., females 9f. The payments to be made quarterly. This is nearly equal to the Queensland labour tariff of £6 a year, and double that of Fiji. In the latter colony, however, they were only supposed to supply the island boys with *sulus*, but, triumph of absurdity, it was made compulsory to furnish mosquito nets in their sleeping places! The official documents in New Caledonia also contained spaces in which the nature of the work, the daily hours of labour, and the hours of repose were supposed to be specified, with any particular conditions. But these were seldom filled up. A note said that the indentured servant, if a field hand, was supposed to work till 9 o'clock in the morning on Sundays; if a domestic servant, he worked always. The ordinary daily term of labour was specified as twelve hours in summer and eleven in winter, with intervals of two hours for rests and refreshment. It will be thus seen that the above books, one of which was kept by the employer and the other by the servant, contained every safeguard for the latter, but of course it depended greatly on individual employers as to how the labour boys were treated. Five years ago I studied this question somewhat; and, detained against my will in Noumea, I gave it still further attention. I have seen the labourers in the coffee fields at Canala; I have seen them as household servants; I have seen them in nearly every condition of labour in New Caledonia; and although there may be many cases of harsh treatment, yet on the whole, as an impartial observer, I declare that from a material point of view, in the satisfaction of physical requirements, these indentured servants are better off than many of the mere labouring classes of Europe.

True, the "labour boys" could be said to have no homes; they could form no family ties; they occasionally got "cuffings,"

often deserved, sometimes undeserved. They were not free agents within the term of their indentures; and yet the question comes, were they not far happier here than in their island wilds? In Noumea the work they did was really very light. To see them walking in the evening, hand in hand; to hear their merry laughter, to witness the saturnalia in which they were allowed to indulge during the *fêtes*, when hundreds congregated round the bonfires in the *Place*, and revelled in imitations of the war-cries and dances of their native homes—all this impressed me with the idea that whatever means might have been used to bring these "boys" hither, the end was certainly one with which they were satisfied. In only one sphere of labour in New Caledonia were they discontented, and that was at the nickel mines. They do not labour in the mines, but outside, doing "pit bank work," carrying bags of ore, &c. This is hard work and unsuited to them, and they die quickly. Out of 48 deaths of New Hebrideans recorded in the *Moniteur*, 27 occurred at the nickel mines, as against 21 amongst those employed on plantations or in towns. None of them go to the mines willingly: the dread of the work there has become traditional in the islands. The captain of the vessel which brought the last lot of hands "bought" by Mr. Higginson, declared that he would never venture back to the island from whence they came. In writing the word "bought," I only quote Mr. Higginson's own words, used with reference to several cargoes of "hands" at a late trial here. It may be that when this gentleman and his associates obtain the annexation of the New Hebrides, and the stoppage of the labour trade thence to Queensland and Fiji, that he will find it easier by some new "system" of "recruiting" to obtain men for his mines.

But that as a rule the labour boys at Noumea were treated fairly, was proved by the fact that so many remained after their three years of service was completed. In many cases they got attached to their employers and their families. The adaptability of these islanders is indeed something wonderful. Here were men, in their native homes but a few years back cannibals, who would have eaten you or me, now docile household servants, trusty nurses, and faithful in the carrying of bags of dollars. It is stated that since the establishment of the labour trade only one out of three have been returned whence they came. At

times the mortality amongst the hands in Queensland and Fiji has been great, but here at least the number who prefer to re-engage is large. From the Bureau of Immigration I obtained two old *livrets* as specimens. They were selected hap-hazard, yet in both cases a re-engagement had taken place. *Tongonne*, native of Ambrym, employed by the chief of the telegraph service, had indentured himself for another year at the rate of fifteen francs a month, being a rise of three francs. *Talone*, also of Ambrym, engaged as domestic in Noumea, had signed five different times for prolonged service of six months each. Certainly, Talone must have been well treated in his place. "Tommy," from Aurora, our waiter, a grave "boy," who always had a puzzled, dubious expression, as if he found the things of this world generally, and the exigencies of service in particular, too much for his comprehension, told me,—"No want go home. Me little fellow when come here, no sabe place belong a me. Suppose me no find people belong a me, perhaps make *kiki* (food) of me. Plenty man make *kiki*." The accounts of anthropophagism current amongst island labourers, and narrated with gusto, might give some the idea, that the sooner all the inhabitants of the New Hebrides were removed to fields of labour where they could die off happily, the better for them and humanity. An amusing instance of this had happened a few nights before. Two young boys sat hand in hand near the English consulate. Like school lads all over the world, they began to brag of their friends. "Men belong a my island kill plenty white captains; make *kiki* of them," said one. "Men belong a mine kill more white captains, make *kiki* plenty white sailormen." And they fell to fisticuffs as to which of their homes had the honour of committing the most murders. Very possibly, the opportunity given, they might have been head hunters and cannibals; here they were harmless lads, useful members of the social and domestic life of Noumea.

The labour traffic had been stopped for twelve months by order of the Governor, for the ostensible purpose of providing the convict population with employment. Convicts could be obtained on application; the standard wages were nine francs a month; of this five was paid to the Government, and four to the man. As the Government found clothes, and the criminals were often expert in trades, a convict was thus, at first sight,

cheaper than a labour boy. But he required heavier rations, and was more apt to turn fractious and run away, joining the gangs of *évadés* with which the country was filled.

With the exception of a spasmodic effort in Levuka, the result of the visit of Bishop Selwyn, no attempt has been made by Protestant pastor or Marist priest to Christianise the labour hands. Labourers from any of the islands where missionaries had established themselves, and established also a respect for the Sabbath (the fourth commandment being one most stringently insisted upon by most of them), must have been very much astonished upon landing in Queensland, Fiji, or New Caledonia, to find that the sacred day was not by any means kept as sacred in those places by the majority of white people, as by the small number of the elect worshipping in the native chapels in their own homes. Things which the missionaries told the islanders were *tabu* to them on that day, as involving omission or commission amounting to deadly sin, they found were not *tabu* to the white man. They would find that the pastor or priest was not looked up to by his countrymen with the respect which they had before associated with the office, rather otherwise in many cases. They would find that they themselves were not troubled about their souls or offices of the church. Whether Catholic, Wesleyan, Presbyterian, or Episcopalian, it mattered not, at Mackay or Maryborough, on the Rewa, or at Canala. They were wanted to work, and not to pray. Sunday was a day of rest and amusement, and not of devotion, on Queensland plantations. In Fiji, I have seen Solomon boys spending their Sabbath in the bush shooting small birds with the arrows of their native land. At Rambi, on Saturday nights the hands would go out into the forest and hunt wild pigs. Armed as they were with guns, they would return loaded with spoil in the morning, and feast on pork and bananas next day. In New Caledonia, I am afraid, they often had to work. Certainly, from the missionaries' point of view, the life a labourer led on a plantation was not calculated to make him a better Christian or more amenable to their teachings. It may be stated as a broad rule that the Kanaka, during his three years' service in either of the labour fields, only learns the name of God as a curse. Indeed, it would be very hard to inculcate religion to islanders of so many different tongues. That is what I find fault with

the Protestant missionaries for. They spend years in acquiring the languages of the different islands, in translating portions of the Scriptures or the whole Scriptures into the different dialects; with the result that they can only have small congregations of people who understand the particular language of the district in which they live. If in Samoa, Tonga, the Fijis, and the New Hebrides, the missionaries had at once set to work and taught the natives English, I think the gain to them would have been far greater in the end, and from the point of view of civilisation would have been an immediate benefit. The missionaries have perpetuated the different dialects by converting them into written languages, and the result is that their operations are confined. If English had been taught, the gain to the islanders in being able to communicate with the outer world is self-evident, and the advantage to the traders and employers in the different labour fields would also have been very great. The French priests have everywhere taught, with the principles of religion, their own language, and it is a gain to the inhabitants of New Caledonia that they can hold ready communication with the natives. In Fiji, on the other hand, the native tongue is made the means of communication, and the result is very vexatious to the traveller. As regards the Marist missions here, the Brothers, in teaching French in their schools, have, as I hold, given a distinct advantage to the Canaques over the natives of Fiji—they have opened to them the literature of the world, as well as the means of communicating freely with a civilised nation. Thus far the Church has been a civiliser—for the spiritual part, it is a matter of individual opinion. It is an advantage to every white denizen of New Caledonia that he can make the natives understand him; it is otherwise in Fiji, where not one "boy" out of a hundred is taught English.

But are the Marist Brothers there doing all they claim? Do missionaries ever come up to their own standpoint? It is five years since I first visited and described the mission of St. Louis, some twelve miles from Noumea. I afterwards drove there again with some young friends. A lovely spot is this mission. Around are many vistas of fresh verdure formed by avenues of native trees passing through fields of maize, sugar-cane, and manioc, with here and there a feathery cocoanut tree waving in the wind, the whole backed up by glimpses of the sea

shining through breaks in the distant forest, or the far-away hill-tops. To the left is the ruggedly bold red-tinged Mount d'Or, from the foot of which stretches a continuous line of hills and mountains, the commencement of the *Chaîne Centrale* of New Caledonia.

There were the same evidences of careful cultivation in the fields, the same church, the same sugar-mill and distillery for rum, the same courteous Director. But the village was still in a transition state. The chief kept his old *tabu* hut, although he lived in a cottage with a well-cultivated garden around. There were other cottages equally well kept, but there were also many of the old huts, and the men and women did not appear to have improved much in cleanliness, if their godliness was up to Rome's standard. But there was one thing quite new here, which aroused my indignation—one of the "works" by which I am sure the fathers will not wish to be judged. A new house was being built near the banks of the stream which divided the mission settlement. We entered the little enclosure, and found the family sitting round a fire at the rear. A kettle and saucepan gave evidences of the preparation of the evening meal. A full-blooded Canaque, black and ugly, was cutting some wood. His wife and a female friend, who had called in for an afternoon chat, were lying on the ground by the fire. The friend was dark enough, and the enormous holes in her ears showed that she didn't "get religion" till late in life. But the wife! I was struck with astonishment when I looked at her. A young girl, not more than nineteen, with a complexion hardly darker than a Spaniard's, with most beautiful eyes, with delicately formed hands and feet, the whole type Caucasian—with the exception, perhaps, of the too full mouth, the loveliest woman I had seen for many a long day. She spoke pure French to me, and her voice was low and sweet. This quadroon girl the mate of such a man!—what a hideous mockery. All nature revolted at the idea. His mate? the child in her arms was nearly white! Her husband did not at all like our intrusion, and went away muttering to himself. He was clad only in a long blue shirt, and was paying the penalty of possessing a handsome wife by having to wait on her. But she? There was an appealing look in her eyes, there was something there I seemed to know, something to which I felt I ought to respond, something which haunted me for days. And

then I learnt that this girl and a younger sister were daughters of an acquaintance of mine, whose eyes one could never mistake. Sent to the native mission school to be brought up by the Sisters, they were suddenly, without the father's knowledge, both married to full-blooded blacks! The whole thing was revolting! it was as bad as anything ever attributed to our slave-owners in the old days. And were not these girls slaves of their spiritual pastors and masters? Daughters of a native woman in New Caledonia, they were supposed to be in a state of "tutelage," to be outside the law of matrimony which applied to the whites; they were married by the Church but not by the law. If this was an evidence of the work at St. Louis, the attacks made on the Marist Fathers in the press of New Caledonia were fully justified.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### TO THE NEW HEBRIDES.

I WAS sincerely glad to leave Noumea. Seldom had I endured four weeks of such continual annoyance. Day by day I had prepared to start, day by day the departure had been postponed. It was not easy to get from Noumea to the New Hebrides. The labour trade was stopped for the time being, or one could have readily obtained passage to any of the islands. When I arrived here I thought myself very lucky in encountering an old "South Sea slaver," a man who knew the islands well, one of the old school, although still young in years—one who boasted of "knocking out the brains" of a vessel on a reef to escape the pursuit of a British man-of-war. A fine handsome fellow too, and "as mild a mannered man as ever scuttled ship, or cut a throat." Readers of Mr. James Payn's "From Exile" will imagine Richard Rideout in the flesh; that was Captain ———. A good man to have by you in a row with the natives; one in whose company I could really have got behind the scenes of life in the Western Pacific. If in the flesh Richard Rideout, in the spirit Mac also resembled the late lamented James Bludso, as immortalised by Colonel John Hay:—

> "A keerless man in his talk was Jim,
> And an awkward cuss in a row."

It was all arranged. A vessel was to be chartered. We should visit Maré, and I would interview the veteran missionary, Mr. Jones; then we should make a call at Aneiteum, and on to Tanna, where Mac owned land. I would see the great volcano there, and thence on northwards. A beautiful programme that. But it didn't come off. I had had my baggage ready night after night, morning after morning, at Mac's behest; still he stirred not. It was not wine, it was the tear of sensibility which had salted my claim. A woman, of course, was in it. Mac,

like greater men, was in the toils of the sex. Whilst he dallied in Capua, I had naught to do but to study the labour question, and curse all South Sea skippers. Life in Nöumea was not enticing. The hotels were wretched, mere pothouses, and the existence altogether was of a particularly shabby-genteel sort. True, the magnificent convict band played twice a week in the Place of the Cocoanuts, but it was hard work to struggle through the rest of the time, unless you took to bacarat at the *Cercle*, or played pool at Fraser's. But, until my present mission should be complete, all little games were put on one side. Inaction is a terrible curse. I could only make short excursions into the country, as Mac swore I must be ready at an hour's notice. How I envied the lot of my *confrère*, Captain Armit, whom I pictured being carried through the jungles of New Guinea in a litter, surrounded by a small army of natives bought by the *Argus* gold.

But when the *D'Estrées* had come in a week before with news of the presence of English men-of-war around Sandwich Island, and of rumoured complications which would arise, I was glad that I had not sailed for the southern islands. I gave up comparing myself to Sisera, against whom the stars in their courses fought, and determined to make Havannah harbour my base of operations. "Good-bye, my gallant Captain Mac. If you go to Tanna or Jericho I care not. I may meet you again. *Sans adieu*, I wish you a happy issue out of all your scrapes." To get to Vaté seemed easy enough. The *Calédonien*, a small steamer belonging to the New Hebrides Company, was leaving next day. It was the only means of communication between Noumea and the islands. So my agent applied to the secretary of the Company for a passage on my account. It was refused, with a reference to Mr. John Morgan, manager of the Company. That gentleman also refused to grant me a passage, until he knew what I was going for, and until I applied in person. It was intimated to me that I should not be allowed to depart unless I gave certain pledges with reference to my criticisms of the actions of the Company, which would have been an impossibility.

But let me do Mr. John Morgan justice. He explained that he only desired a personal interview on my own account. "Where and how did I purpose to live when put ashore at Havannah?" "In a tent on the beach, anywhere," I answered.

Then Mr. Morgan told me tales of fever. The only house at Havannah was where Captain Macleod, their manager, lived, and I must go there. In many places in the islands the only white men I should meet would be their agents. Possibly, the only chance I should have of leaving Vaté for the other islands would be in one of their vessels. And so, although it was felt on my first arrival in Noumea that I, as a representative of a Victorian journal, was not at all favourable to French operations in the islands—and the New Hebrides Company is nothing if not French, Mr. John Morgan having changed his nationality to protect his interests—still, Mr. Morgan would be the last to throw obstacles in my way: the Company was a legitimate trading association, and I could see for myself what it had done, and every facility should be given me by its officers. I acknowledge my sense of his courtesy in this matter. Identified as I am with the colonies, I am strongly opposed to the policy of the New Hebrides Company, as leading to French annexation. I do not think I shall alter that opinion; and, therefore, Mr. Morgan's proffered kindnesses were a good deal in the nature of coals of fire on my head.

I have not the slighest doubt that the New Hebrides Company will turn out to be a very good thing indeed in the future. Where money is to be made, business men have no "sentiment." The most extraordinary thing in connection with this Company is that it was started, and is controlled, by men who are British-born subjects; and that it is supported by the English residents in Noumea! I know also of one Sydney merchant who owns shares in it. Yet the operations of this Company afford the French Government a palpable excuse—the only excuse—for hoisting the *tricolor*. We shall see. In the meantime, my first proceeding was to take Mr. Morgan's permission to the secretary to accept my money in exchange for a passage to Sandwich. My next, to take care to be on board early the night before the departure. The *Calédonien* lay out in the bay, and as in Noumea there are no boats for hire, it is often awkward to obtain means of embarkation. But I knew the tricks and ways of people in Noumea now. I went on board the *Calédonien* in the boat of the New York ship *Helicon*, my tall Yankee friend, Captain Howes, seeing me safe. In our persons Cape Cod and the Appomatox have several times "shaken hands over the bloody

chasm." The worshipful master was also with us. I wrote my last despatch to *The Argus*, and camped on the cabin settees, hoping that when I awoke in the morning we should be well away. But, alas, for good intentions! Before daybreak steam was up, the anchor raised, and we were off; but then the engineer had an attack of fever, and we returned to Noumea, he being taken to the hospital.

It certainly seemed that I should never get to the New Hebrides. I was detained four days longer in Noumea. I began to know every stone in the Rue de l'Alma. Every vagrant dog in the place recognised me. I knew every horse, from the celebrated creams to Saxton's gaunt hack. The men in the convict band took off their hats to me. I lost a Napoleon in franc "lives" at Fraser's, cleanest of all the hostelries. I listened to the prophecies of the worshipful master, who, as a medical man, gave me eighteen months to live after the fever I should catch in the islands. I resisted the offer of a Christian young merchant of Noumea to buy fifty cases of gin from him with which to purchase land from the natives. He offered to take my promissory note at six months for the value, and calculated that I could make a cool £1,000 when the islands were annexed. He was surprised at my "sentiment" in refusing, and that I should have any scruples in trading liquor. I had previously secured from Messrs. Robson and Carter materials for my introduction into the best circles of society in the New Hebrides. Visiting cards were not of much account there; but the two cases of pipes and tobacco I possessed, would carry me anywhere. My life in Noumea was just as miserable as I cared about having it. The only person who amused me was Fraser's Santo boy "Toby." He was the most "amoosin little cuss" I had seen since Mr. Henry M. Stanley's "Kalula." (The way in which the latter in New York imitated the Arabs catching fleas at their prayers convulsed us with laughter.)

Then the *Bruat* came in with news of an exciting affair at Ambrym, and as I was able to obtain full particulars of it, I found my time had not been wasted. Captain Belbin, of the Queensland "labour" vessel *Borough Belle*, had been shot by the natives without any provocation. H.M.S. *Dart* arrived at Ambrym a few days afterwards. She landed a party with Commander Moore in charge, and attacked the village of Ballat,

where the outrage occurred. One seaman, William Parker, was killed. The boatswain, Thomas Nineham, was severely wounded, and was brought down to hospital at Noumea by the *Bruat*. The following is Nineham's statement, which I took at his bedside :—

"When our captain was informed of the skipper's death, he had a long confab with Mr. Craig, a white trader there. It was half-past eleven at night when we landed. There were in the party twenty men, with Captain Moore, Lieutenant Dawson, and myself. We heard that they had sent all the women and children away into the hills, as they expected us to fire on them, but we landed near Mr. Craig's, four miles away, by the shore. Mr. Craig came with us, and we had two native guides. The captain led through the bush. We went in single file ; two could not walk abreast. I don't know how many miles we went round by the track, but we walked till within a quarter of an hour of daylight. I never had such a hard tramp in my life. It was a real forced march, up and down hill, through soft ground, in which we sank up to our knees over the roots of trees and creepers. You were hardly able to see your hand before you. Not a word was spoken. We passed by two villages. In one they said there were 500 natives, but we awoke nobody. The affair was well planned, for we had just got into skirmishing line in front of the village when day broke. The natives could see that we had them then. They could not get away, as the sea was at their back. If we had attempted to land by daylight they would have taken to the bush, and if we had attempted to follow they would have picked off every mother's son of us. They beat tomtoms, and yelled and peppered away at us, and we peppered at them, but, bless your heart! they would not stand out and fight. They dodged around the houses and trees, and a few managed to get behind us that way. It was one of these, who had climbed a tree, who shot me in the side as I was trying to get a sight of a beggar in front. We had been skirmishing then for two or three hours. I cannot say how many they lost, but I do not think very many got away. Our boats had come round by this time, and the village was burnt down. Nothing could have been planned better. The captain was in the thick of it. This was Sunday, and on Monday I heard we were to make another attack, but as the *Bruat* came along, and the

captain kindly offered to bring me to the hospital here, I do not know what else was done. Poor Parker was not dead when we left, but our doctor said he could not live till morning, or they would have brought him along too. He was shot, like me, by a man up a tree. There is a missionary not far off, but, bless your heart! they can't make anything out of these beggars. They have got no gratitude. This skipper they shot was a good friend to them, and was trying to do them a good turn when they killed him. I would like you to say that if I had been their father, the captain and officers of the *Bruat* could not have been kinder to me. No one could have been treated better than I was. I shall be all right in a week or two. I would take a great deal more than this to help to give those cannibals a thrashing, so that they can't always say, 'Englishmen come big ship, plenty talk, do nothing; he no good fight.'"

Boatswain Nineham's graphic account of the fight at Ballat was most interesting. He himself, lying in the hospital ward nursed by one of the Sisters of St. Joseph, was an interesting study, a fine type of the British tar. He was a west countryman, tall, strong, and dark, the stamp of man you could imagine serving under Sir Walter Raleigh, or "Amyas Leigh;" one who would follow to the death in the cause of duty. During the hour I spent by his bedside and listened to his quaint story of the fight, I got quite to like Nineham, and cursed my ill-luck that I had not been there. "Old man," said Mr. H. W. when I told him this, "you were better out of it. You can't skip about as you used to, and the Kanaka who would miss such a mark must be a bad shot." Since the days of Elisha, the elders have always been thus mocked by the rising generation. Having liked this honest brave Boatswain Nineham as I did, I was sorry that he should have been rather scurvily treated here. The *Bruat* brought him down to the hospital at Noumea. She was returning with the guns and anchors of La Perouse, buried for so many decades in the coral at Vanikoro. But the other day the *Bruat* and the *Dart* were watching each other suspiciously, ready to commence war at once—yet now? A brave man has been wounded in a contest with savages, and Captain Benier takes Nineham on board, and nurses him tenderly. White blood is thicker than water, and Englishman and Frenchman are akin when brought

face to face with savages. Nineham was deposited in the officers' quarters at the hospital by Captain Benier; but owing to some absurd regulation as regards scale of payment, was removed by Mr. Layard's orders to the third class, where ordinary seamen were generally lodged. It seemed rather hard that Great Britain could not pay the extra franc a day required. Captain Benier himself was very indignant. "That brave nice man to be treated so! I would sooner pay all the charges myself than it should happen," said he. I expect the sailors of the *Dart* would give three cheers for the captain and officers of the *Bruat*, when they heard how well their boatswain had been treated by them. For myself, I felt that if I should come to grief in the islands—and when I saw both the captain and the engineer of the ship I was going in down with fever in the hospital, the outlook was not promising—I should want nothing better than to be nursed in Noumea by Sister Mary Marguerite.

Captain Howes again rowed me on board the *Calédonien*. My last shake of the hand was given to an American. I slumbered on the couch at one end of the cabin, and Oubatche, the Santo boy steward, at the other. I should have preferred a white man there. When I awoke at daybreak and found coffee on the table, we were really off. The sun was rising as I took my last look at Noumea. It was not the first time I had seen it rise there. That day the morn broke auspiciously. The sun gilded the heights of the *Chaîne Centrale*. Far up in the valleys, the white mist was seen rising, scattered by its rays. It struck northwards to Paita and the plains of St. Vincent. It showed up the semaphore station on the hill above Noumea, and the masonic lodge crowning another eminence. It defined all the beauties of the outline of the bay. It lighted up Ile Nou and the gangs of convicts going to work. A beautiful place, indeed, is this Noumea outwardly; but I never want to go there again. Outside the harbour we skirted down the coast inside the great reef, and our new captain and engineer were all on the *qui vive*, but the latter soon got sea-sick. The whole coast of New Caledonia is beautiful. Undulating shores, hills covered with verdure, bolder mountains with promise of mineral wealth behind. We passed bay after bay, and by breakfast time were in the Woudin Canal, a narrow channel between the coast and the island of Uen. Leaving the Baie de Sud to our left.

in the afternoon we rounded the south-east corner of New Caledonia, and through the coral reef at the Havannah Pass out to sea. Once before I had been down this coast, but then I went on southward to the Isle of Pines.

The *Calédonien,* formerly known on the coast of New South Wales as the *Pacific,* was a screw steamer of 110 tons, which, in fine weather and at full speed, would make quite five miles an hour. Her crew consisted of a captain, mate, and boatswain, an engineer and two assistants, and cook. These were the seven white men, but there were also eight natives on board—two who acted as firemen, and six as sailors. A crew of fifteen is a heavy complement for a vessel of 110 tons, yet it is required for safety in these seas. Half of the natives were labour boys, the rest were from Lifu, engaged for such terms as pleased them, and receiving 75 francs a month pay. I do not think they give £3 a month to sailors out of English ports now. These natives did all the steering, however, and appeared to know their work as well as any white man. We had three passengers besides myself—a mulatto from the Isle of Bourbon, and his wife and child. He was going to Sandwich to be employed by the company. The *force majeure* of circumstances was overcoming all my prejudices. Here I was eating with "niggers," and sleeping in the same cabin with them—at least with Oubatche, the Santo boy. But after the first meal the mulattoes were sea-sick and kept their room, and François the boatswain was introduced at table in their stead. As a companion at meals I did not consider François a success. He was a fat greasy Normandy boy of twenty, whose principal use was to curse the boys in English. He ——ed it, and ——ed so fluently that one was surprised to find it was nearly all he knew of the language. His appetite was enormous, and he went to sleep at a moment's notice. The "saloon" was on deck for'rad. Extra cleanliness, of course, was out of the question; but we were well fed. There was good sound wine, good cognac after, and vermouth and absinthe before meals. Oubatche, the steward, was not by any means a bad boy. He had a profound sense of humour, and as I made one or two jokes when I first came on board, he went off into fits of laughter whenever I spoke or looked at him. I believe he regarded me in much the same light as one of the Melbourne "gods" regards popular comedians, who have but to open their mouths to elicit

a roar. We had also on board a dog, a pig, and a hen, all pets. The dog, however, was not like my old friend Bo'sen, but was a foolish and fond French terrier. The pig was from the islands, most diminutive of its species. Whether it has been bred down and down to its present size from animals left by Captain Cook and the early Spanish navigators, I cannot say, but the pig of the islands is a wonder of natural history. Our animal was remarkably tame and self-possessed; he lived in the galley with the cook. At night the captain took the settee under the cabin compass, so that he could sleep with one eye open on the doings of the man at the wheel. A bed was made up for me on the floor, and Oubatche took the other sofa. Then the fat boy entered, and knocked Oubatche off. The poor darky had just room to camp alongside me on the floor. The fat boy snored, and made the cabin redolent of garlic. As a precautionary measure, I should have eaten some myself. If I had been going a long journey, I should have objected to these close quarters.

In the morning we were skirting alongside the shores of Maré. This island in no place exceeds an altitude of 250 feet. Its flat level plains are very fertile, and it supports a population of from 6,000 to 7,000 natives, two or three French and one English missionary. Maré is the second island of the Loyalty group, considered to be a "*dependence*" of New Caledonia, and is under French rule. But ten years before the *tricolor* was hoisted on these islands, the London Missionary Society had taken possession of them in the name of Christianity and Great Britain. In 1854, the Rev. J. Jones landed on Maré, where he has ever since remained. It was not till 1864 that the French flag, a French commandant, and French Marist priests made their appearance at Maré and Lifu. The latter is the largest island of the group. These islands, being of coral formation, and nearly level, are of great fertility. The Loyalty Islanders more closely resemble the Tongans, and the Polynesians generally, than the races of Melanesia. Brave, intelligent, trustworthy, there are no natives of the South Seas whom I so much respect. The Rev. J. Jones had good ground in which to sow the seed. The harvest, no doubt, would have been much more promising but for the presence of an opposition propaganda.

Attempts were early made to expel the Protestant mission-

aries from Lifu and Maré. But the London Missionary Society brought pressure, through "Exeter Hall," on the Foreign Secretary, and a promise was easily obtained from the Emperor's Ministers that Mr. Jones and his comrades should be unmolested in future. So he has continued the good work, testimony to which is thus given from a French source, a recent number of *L'Indépendant*, of Noumea, "M. Jones is a missionary who, by his activity and his energy, has transformed part of the population of Maré. He has not only converted the natives, he has civilised them. He has been established among them for more than thirty years. He has taught them reading, writing, and trades of different kinds—of the blacksmith, carpenter, turner, bootmaker, saddler, &c. He has himself, with their assistance, built his own house, which is one of the prettiest in Maré; also workshops for the trades, a residence for the chief, Naisseline, an accommodation house, very spacious and comfortable, which is at present inhabited by Pastor Krug; several churches, and a very pretty cathedral in miniature, which is to be finished in the future. In one word, M. Jones has identified himself with the natives, and they ought consequently to have a very great affection for him and profound respect." And, as I know, every white man has also a great respect for Mr. Jones—a man who would take his oar in a boat to pull through the surf to a ship in distress, and who would nobly succour a wrecked crew. The phrase, "every white man," however, does not include the French officials, to whom he has ever been a thorn in the flesh. Not from a religious point of view; for your French officer, except a few of Breton blood, is nothing if not an atheist. I give the Marist Fathers a great deal more credit than the French commandants do: the soldier always despises the priest. I remember, in 1878, how the bravest man in New Caledonia said to me, "I would not have such *canaille* in my house." But Mr. Jones to the French commandants at Maré was a disturbing element. He was English, he taught his flock English, he was in every way opposed to French interests; and he resisted the injustice and tyranny to which the natives were so often exposed.

Mr. Jones has had hard work to maintain his ground in Maré. My friend Mr. Layard, C.M.G., the British consul in Noumea, has often had to put his foot down on the missionary's

behalf. He has for years vexed the souls of different governors and local commandants. In their place I, like them, should have wished Mr. Jones in—Ireland. For I must admit that the presence of the Protestant pastors in the Loyalties has not been altogether an unmixed blessing, and has many times caused the authorities considerable trouble. The *odium theologicum* has raged there with great bitterness. Religious disputes have taken the place of the old tribal wars. The Catholic converts of one village, distinguished by wearing little brass crosses round their necks, fought their Protestant neighbours, who only "sabed Mr. Jones." The latter, when authority interfered, were, of course, always held to be in the wrong. Mr. Jones's believers were transported to Cochin China and the Isle of Pines. Many died in the former unhealthy locality. In Noumea, in the office of the Director of the Interior, a friend drew my attention to an emaciated native, with whom he was shaking hands. "This old chief is the last of twenty sent to Cochin China. The rest died of the fever. Not one of them deserved any punishment. It is a disgraceful, burning shame the way these French people have treated the men of Maré." Bold and outspoken language this! my friend would perhaps be a more prosperous man if he remembered the proverb about speaking softly of authority. But Freemasonry is a power in Noumea, as M. Henri Rochefort found out; and a prominent mason has privileges. Those Australians who know Mr. Carter on his visits to the colonies would not take him for a missionary supporter. But he, knowing the Loyalties well, is a warm friend of, and has the highest respect for, Mr. Jones.

Mr. Jones is now in fact the ruling spirit of Maré. The Marist priests have taught French in the schools, the natives mostly speak French, but the "*man-a-wee-wee*" is hated there, as throughout the Pacific. Mr. Jones has taught English in his schools, as a set-off against the French. To my missionary friends in the New Hebrides and Papua I point this out as an example they should follow. As the Marist Fathers always teach their converts French, and Mr. Jones in self-defence has had to teach his English, so the Papuan and the New Hebridean could be taught, if the missionaries put their minds to it. Very good English do Mr. Jones's pupils speak, and they are very nice-spoken and very polite to Englishmen. I have

seen, too, a letter written by a young maiden of Maré, better expressed, and in a better hand than some would turn out in American State schools. I am glad to bear testimony to Mr. Jones's work, although the building of the enormous church, which the French call a "cathedral," seems to me rather supererogatory. This temple, however, is to be an evidence of faith—of faith, not only in Mr. Jones, but in England and the Protestant Church. The Protestants, in fact, only nominally Christian though they may be, control Maré. They can "clean out" the Catholics there. During the native war in New Caledonia in 1878 a proposal was seriously made to Governor Olry that 1,000 armed men from Maré should be landed on the east coast and be told, "Those Canaques in the *Chaîne Centrale* are all Catholics. Go at them!" The result would have been annihilation to the rebels. Governor Olry would not listen to such a proposition, and, I am happy to say, also refused the admission of Protestant pastors to the main island. The authorities certainly have, from their standpoint, quite enough difficulty in the conflict of creed in the Loyalties.

They cannot get rid of Mr. Jones by fair means, and so a side blow has been tried. A French *Protestant* pastor, a M. Krug, has been landed at Maré, appointed and supported by the authorities. He has been working hard, endeavouring to cause a split in Mr. Jones's congregation. He did cause some little disturbance. The natives were incensed against him, and it is said sermons were delivered in the churches by native preachers against the French authority. And so the resident commandant interfered. Pastor Krug is to be maintained in Maré. "He is French, we have appointed him, and should uphold him," they say. The natives suspected of attachment to Mr. Jones are menaced with banishment to the Isle of Pines. Even the great chief Naisseline is so threatened. Now Naisseline possesses as much personal power as any man in the Pacific. He speaks English well, and when dressed up in his black suit would be considered quite an ornament on the Exeter Hall platform. Of course, he doesn't like the French. Should there be any attempt to deport him, and he made the sign, there might be considerable trouble and difficulty. The men of Maré are nominally Christians, but the old fighting blood of their ancestors is yet strong within them. Trampled on as they have been by French authority,

who can say in what direction their passions would run riot if once aroused by injustice to their chief? But Mr. Jones will, of course, declare for peace. Then authority will force the French Krug on the natives, and he will endeavour to reap where English Jones has sown. Our sympathies of course go with the latter. As a missionary and a "white man" I esteem him; and I trust that the attention of the English authorities will be drawn to the unmanly attempts made by the French to force Mr. Jones to leave the place where he has for thirty years worthily laboured.

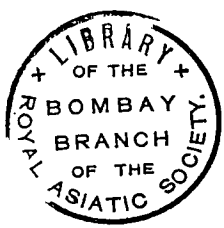
We passed the island of Tiga, and then, thoroughly out of French waters, we sailed in a northerly direction for Vaté, in the centre of the New Hebrides group. These islands lie to the north-east of New Caledonia, and to the west of the Fijis, between 14° and 20° south latitude, and between 167° and 170° east longitude. The total area of the New Hebrides is estimated at 3,500 square miles. They are the most easterly of the western division of Polynesia—the largest island is Espiritu Santo. In 1606, De Quiros, the Spanish navigator, sailing in search of a great southern continent, discovered land which he called *Terra Australis*. He described it as a country of gold and silver, and precious stones, and spice trees, a land of "milk and honey" generally. This was the present Santo. After Santo comes Mallicollo, then Ambrym, Vaté, Erromango, Tanna, Aneitium, and various other small islands. One fertile island disappeared bodily in 1871. The inhabitants are altogether reputed to number about a quarter of a million, and are fierce cannibals of repulsive habits. Erromango is a well-known name in missionary history, for there the Rev. John Williams was massacred. Other missionaries there afterwards shared his fate.

Master mariners are cautioned to beware of their charts whilst sailing these seas. I had the very latest procurable in Sydney, which was full of vague notes—"This island is reported to lie four miles further E," &c. Our captain had two French charts, which did not agree. In the distance between Maré and Vaté there was a discrepancy of thirty miles, and between their reckoning and that of my chart fifty miles—quite enough to go ashore by at night. Which was correct? There was a calm sea, and the *Calédonien* behaved well. *Malgré* the presence of the fat

boy and Oubatche, I managed to sleep well; not as in the sleep, though, which I enjoyed on the manuka bushes around Manipori. In the morning we were off the coast of Tanna, with Erromango ahead. These islands are mountainous, some thousands of feet high. From another direction we could see for many miles the glare of the volcano of Tanna, the great lighthouse of the South Seas. As I looked through the glasses at the two torn peaks of Erromango abeam, and remembered the massacres of Christian men and women there, I wondered much at the apologists for the slaying of many white men in the Western Pacific. These missionaries were killed after they had been many years working amongst the natives; slain, certainly not in revenge for any "outrages" of labour vessels, but in pure wanton lust of blood. All history shows, that on many of these islands the natives have from the first known time been treacherous and bloodthirsty: they are to white people but what they are to each other in their own homes. I believe that many of these murders are like those committed by Australian blacks, without premeditation; often apparently senseless, caused by a sudden fit of passion or greed, with a given opportunity which could not be resisted. But, whereas the Australian black fights for his own hand, and for the coveted fat of his friend or enemy, the South Sea savage fights in a tribe or family.

At five o'clock our Ambrym boy, who was at the masthead, gave the cry, "Land ho!" and we joyously repaired to dinner. Never in all his long experience, our genial mate said, had he had such fine weather *en voyage* to the New Hebrides. I claimed that I was the Mascotte. Indeed, if not lucky myself, I generally am lucky to my friends. We passed our last evening in discussing the labour question and the sad fate of Captain Belbin, whom our skipper knew well. The tears came into the eyes of the honest Norman as he spoke of kindnesses he received, when once shipwrecked in the islands, at the hands of the dead mariner. Onwards we steamed through the calm night till the moon had set, but although there were neither lights nor beacons, our captain still kept ahead. There is no coral reef around Vaté, and there is deep water close to the entrance. Indeed, the only disadvantage in Havannah Harbour is that the water is too deep, and that vessels have to go close in shore to find anchorage. It

was four o'clock in the morning when we cast anchor close to a dark body, which I was told was the hulk. In spite of the fat boy, I had had a pleasant passage. The captain and the mate were as courteous as only French sailors can be. But now, on the base of operations, I was happy. I could face the fever with which I was threatened with a light heart.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### ON VATÉ.

I WAS awake at daylight. We were in a land-locked bay somewhat resembling that of Noumea. It is formed by two islands, Deception and Protection, so called by that greatest of all nomenclators, Captain Cook. It has two good entrances for vessels of any size, and a boat passage at the north. In the old days this place was a great rallying-point for Fijian and Queensland labour vessels, and for island traders generally. Men-of-war have visited Havannah more than any other harbour in the group. Ten years ago there were several traders' establishments here. Messrs. Hedimann, of Fiji, and Scott, Henderson and Co., of Sydney, had large interests in the place. There were plantations of Sea Island cotton, ginning-machines, and coir machinery, and a schooner ran regularly to and from Sydney. There was an apparently prosperous present and a flourishing future for Havannah Harbour, at the time the mission settlement was established here in 1872. Then the field of labour recruitment drifted further north to the Solomons and New Britain. The fall in the price of cotton caused that industry to "fizzle out." Messrs. Scott, Henderson, and Hedimann abandoned their stations, some of the white men there died and others left, and at last there remained but Captain Macleod, manager of the New Hebrides Company, and the Rev. D. Macdonald, the missionary, who, however, had been absent in Victoria for a year. Havannah Harbour was lively in those high old times, when Thakambau, "by the grace of God" and the will of Thurston, Wood, Butters, and Co., was king of Fiji; when the Yankee, Colonel Jennings, lorded it on the beach at Levuka, and threatened to shoot offenders "in their tracks," till he got well thrashed by an old woman he had insulted; and when, although "Thak" reigned, square gin ruled from Lau to Ra. In those days "recruiting" ships from Levuka put into Havannah to replenish their supplies of

"square." I remember hearing a story of a traveller who visited a Fijian vessel in this harbour. As he neared her he saw a white man leaning disconsolately over the rail. "Good morning, captain." "I'm not the captain; I'm the cook." "Where's the captain?" "He's lying down—drunk." "Where's the mate?" "He's lying down—drunk, too." Looking into the galley, the stranger said, "You don't appear to have much to cook here." "Precious little cooking wanted whilst there's any gin knocking about," was the reply.

Captain Cook discovered Vaté in 1774, and gave it the additional name of Sandwich, after his patron, then First Lord of the Admiralty. In 1849, Admiral Erskine, father of the present Admiral Erskine, discovered Havannah Harbour, naming it after his vessel. It is eight miles long and two to three broad, and it is without doubt one of the most beautiful anchorages in the world. On the shore there was a very low fringe of white sandy beach. Beyond that, a level plain extended, covered with all the luxuriance of tropical foliage. Tall cocoanut trees were swaying in the wind, broad banana leaves hid bunches of their fragrant fruit, the banyan and the *ivi* (Tahitian chestnut) were monarchs of the bush. A goodly valley stretched far away towards the hills. Nearer at hand one saw cleared lands and evidences of cultivation, and to the south a series of terraces rose in a manner which reminded one of the shores of Lake Wakitipu in New Zealand; and, although covered with deep vegetation, they are similar in that they are caused by volcanic action. The stages of the different upheavals are clearly defined. On shore a galvanised iron store was visible. This was Captain Macleod's residence, and the headquarters of the New Hebrides Company in Sandwich. Further along there was a low, thatched house, the scaffolding of a new building, and the ruins of some other buildings. This was Havannah, the future capital of the colony of the New Hebrides, as it looked from the sea that August morning.

There was little life yet stirring, no one showed up on the grim old hulk by our side. Looking up the bay I saw it dotted with a number of white sails. It reminded me of Japan, and I was at first puzzled to account for them. Taking the glasses, I saw that they belonged to native canoes, outriggers. It was a novelty to see calico or cloth sails on them; wherever I

had been elsewhere in the Pacific, mats had served in their place. One of these canoes shortly came alongside with bananas and eggs; but the price being pretty exorbitant a trade was not effected. Then there came on board an old white man, who had with him a little half-caste girl clad in a printed orange robe with a blue kerchief twisted round her head. Her Hindoo features and the straightness of her hair showed that she had no Melanesian blood in her. "Old Frank" was wonderfully tattooed about the arms. He was a sample of that nearly extinct class—the *bêche-de-mer* men. He had spent his whole life round the Pacific. He spoke both French and English imperfectly, and although he claimed to belong to France, his nationality was not admitted by the authorities. He informed me that little Emily's mother was a Line Island woman, and that she herself was born in Levuka. Thereupon I mustered up my stock of Fijian, and, *Venaka Sara!* captured the good-will of the little maiden. She was but nine years of age. It was seven o'clock when we started ashore. As I jumped on to the beach I was welcomed by a beautiful black retriever and two or three smaller dogs. But the former growled at little Emily, who in affright ran behind me, and before I was aware had, like a monkey, climbed up my back and on to my shoulders, and I had to carry her to the store, where I shook hands with, and was cordially welcomed by, Captain Donald Macleod. A tall, powerful, quiet-spoken man, of some forty-five years of age, Captain Macleod impressed you with the idea that he was, above everything, "level-headed;" not one to be led away by impulse. He was a Nova Scotian by birth, for sixteen years had been trading in the islands on his own account, and was so well known, and had acquired such interests and influence, that the first proceeding of the New Hebrides Company was to buy him out for a very handsome sum, and retain his services as resident manager. He will develop himself as we go along.

After breakfast Captain Macleod kindly accompanied me towards the missionary settlement. There was a footpath—sometimes scarcely defined—in the midst of the wild luxuriance of nature, which was beautiful to behold, but which contained deadly miasma. We passed a house occupied by a West Indian negro and loyal subject of Her Majesty, called "Black Harry."

But Harry had a white heart, as we shall see anon. A small cottage was being prepared for the reception of the Bourbon half-caste and his wife, who came down with us in the *Calédonien*. He was a carpenter, and had a brother likewise employed here. These Bourbonais were being largely employed by the New Hebrides Company, not only because they were French citizens and worked cheaply, but because it was supposed they could stand the climate better than Europeans. Several of them slept on board the hulk, from which the *Bruat* on her last trip removed the guard of marines which she had left there. Past the site of the old cotton gin and engine-house, there was a broad open space, where Captain Macleod was having a fine three-story house built. There were several acres of land here much higher than the store, which, as I was about to sleep there, it was consoling to hear reputed to be the most unhealthy spot round about. This, I imagine, will be the centre of the new city, which some day is likely to spring up. It is a beautiful position, commanding the bay, the islands, and the high mountains of Mono or Montague island to the north. I wanted to buy some town lots here, but was unsuccessful. Havannah, owing to its grand harbour and the revival of trade, augmented by the New Hebrides Company, will always be a place of importance, whether annexed or not. It was once proposed that the Deputy Commissioner of the Western Pacific, Mr. Romilly, should take up his abode on Protection Island opposite, England's flag being hoisted on a plot of land purchased years ago by Commodore Goodenough. Mr. Romilly would have the interests of about three British subjects to look after in Vaté; still, its central position made it about the best place to select as a residence. Captain Macleod showed me a spot where a church attended by the white residents once stood. It was merely a grass-thatched barn, and when the congregation fell off, and the place was accidentally burnt, the missionary, Mr. Macdonald, confined his ministrations to the natives. After this we struck a bush trail. On one side we caught glimpses of the bay shining in silver splendour through the trees: on the beach a son of the soil, nude, except for an apology for a waistband, but decorated with a coronet and armlet of beads, stalked along carrying a small bow and a brace of arrows. What did he seek? How I envied him his thickness of wool and strength of skull, which

enabled him to walk, like Adam before the Fall, unabashed in the noonday glare, whilst I skulked into every bit of shade I could. Suddenly he raised his bow and fired twice, and wading into the water pulled out two fish transfixed on the arrows.

Onward we went, the cocoanut and the breadfruit tree meeting overhead, here and there an occasional patch of bananas visible, or a fenced clearing where yams were planted. But both clearing and fencing were of a very perfunctory character. Near one of these we met with the disciple whom the missionary most loved, the "boss" teacher left in charge of the souls and morals of the faithful at Havannah, whilst Mr. Macdonald was away in Victoria. An ordinary-looking black-fellow this disciple, clad in a pocket-handkerchief round his loins and an old shirt above it. He had a bunch of husked cocoanuts and some yams in a basket by his side. Every native claims particular trees, and his rights are respected by the others. But on Vaté, where the soil is so prolific, and the population of late years greatly reduced, food increases faster than mouths. The soul of Malthus would be rejoiced there. The disciple answered readily to the name of "Dick." He was not much to look at, but was, they said, a fair reader of his native language, as the missionaries had rendered it, and was powerful in expounding the Scriptures. Dick had lately got into trouble with his congregation. He imagined that his position had its rights as well as its duties; and, on his own wife dying, he appropriated the partner of another man. Public opinion vindicated itself in smashing up Dick's few household goods and rooting up his yam patch. But Dick stuck to the woman, and she remained faithful to him. Dick, they said, again held forth on Sundays, and the injured husband had only the redress of spreading the report that Dick's theology approached heresy. When Mr. Macdonald returned the whole question was to be settled by him.

Onward we went, gorgeous butterflies flitting through the trees—the only sign of life except the friendly mosquito, who there was always with us. All along the track there were crab-holes, which made it necessary to take heed to our feet. We crossed several beautiful streams of clear water, and a stout fence running up from the small bluff along the beach, enclosing the mission station and property. Fat pigs with their families

were running about in the bush; fine porkers these as any to be found in Suffolk or Illinois, related to good English stock left by Captain Cook or subsequent mariners, and of no connection with the undersized animals in the islands further north. Climbing another fence, we were in the mission village. There were not a dozen houses, if houses they could be called. Imagine a thatched roof built up from the ground; that is a New Hebrides habitation. They had no walls and no windows, and were low, dark, and dirty—far inferior to any huts I had seen elsewhere in the Pacific. In front of each place there was a patch, ballasted with fine coral, on which the family could sit and exchange ideas with their neighbours. These served the place of the American "porch." There were only some women and babies to be seen. The former ran into the dirty holes, which they called "home," at our approach, with an over-affectation of modesty which their hideous looks rendered highly superfluous. But Captain Macleod told me that on Sandwich the women were ground down more than on any of the islands he knew, and were afraid to look at any man but their liege lord. "When here, or indeed anywhere in the Hebrides, you hear of a woman being 'stolen,' don't you believe it," said he; "they go willingly, to escape from some chief who claims them, just the same as that woman has taken up with Dick."

The reflection at once comes, and I write it now, being very willing "to take it back" should my opinions hereafter alter, "Is this the result of years of missionary teaching? What real improvement is there in the habits of these people? in what respect are they materially benefited?" The reply of the missionary, I suppose, would be:—"You cannot see the change. We have touched their hearts first by faith; in years to come, slowly but surely, their outward manners will be changed." Certainly, here faith is the evidence of things not seen at the first glance. But "level-headed" Captain Macleod told me, "I believe the missionaries have everywhere done a certain amount of good. They have made the natives quieter; they have stopped cannibalism, they have stopped their carrying arms; the natives now refer their disputes to the missionaries instead of fighting, as before. The only thing to be said against the missionaries is, that they have always attacked and set themselves in opposition to the traders, instead of working with

them. From the commencement, they seem to have set themselves against every white man in the Pacific. In an enormous undertaking such as the labour trade has been for the last twenty years, of course there have been abuses; but it hasn't done any good to have every white skipper or trader described as a scoundrel. Mr. Macdonald here is a good fellow, and has done as much good as he can, perhaps. He has got the people well under him. You mustn't think that all the missionaries have got such a good billet as he has. I should think he has the best on the group."

From all accounts, the Rev. Daniel Macdonald, the first Victorian missionary, was an active, muscular Christian, one of the church militant when necessary. The missionary "compound" which we entered, was spacious, with some half-dozen buildings therein. There was a frame house with a galvanised iron roof and verandah, and other thatched houses for dining-room, stores, servants, visitors, &c. In the missionary's absence everything was well looked after; every spot was whitewashed, the coral gravelled walks were kept clear from weeds, the fowls which ran around were evidently well fed, the iron water tanks were full; the master might have returned at a moment's notice, and found all ready to his hand. Passing through the garden, kept clear from all undergrowth, but beautiful with flowering shrubs, we walked into a fine spit of sand, affording good landing at any state of the tide. Here there was a thatched boat-shed, built with a great deal more care than any of the native houses. Two fine boats were in this, one a whale-boat capable of navigating the whole of the group during this summer weather, the other, smaller, for use in the harbour. Both were well painted and fit for work. It was very evident that the disciples left in charge of the material part of the mission were more faithful to their trust than the teacher "Dick." Looking at the beautiful site of this mission station, at the commodious premises, at the fact that there were evidently a number of willing hands to do all necessary work, not completely isolated from the world either, but on the banks of a harbour where many vessels entered, and close to a store where all the necessaries of life might be procured, I came to the conclusion that a missionary here might lead a happy life. He is the priest and king over his flock; he has no "elders" to question his orthodoxy, or the

length of his sermons; he is absolute ruler of himself and his followers. How many a toiling curate in England, or poorly-paid pastor in a Scotch manse, would consider this a life to be envied. I trust Mr. Macdonald will excuse the liberty I took in surveying his house, and that the card I put under his door remained till his return.

If I admired his house, I can't say as much for the church close by. It was a thatched barn, the sides of reeds and bamboos, the floor of broken coral. Logs of wood resembling sleepers were placed on low supports on each side, affording sitting accommodation for over one hundred people. There was a small table and chair at the end. It was Puritan in the severity and plainness of the "fixings." There were open windows and open doors. It was the most primitive place of worship one could imagine. We climbed another fence and passed a pigsty, where the missionary's boar led an easy life. A fine animal this, whose tusks had grown into the ring so prized by the natives, the teeth of the upper jaw having been knocked out to facilitate the operation. On the other side there was a paddock, in which a hundred or so of goats, of all ages and sizes, were skipping about. From these the missionary obtained milk and meat. A little further on, and having diverged into the bush, we came to a cleared space of ground, "God's Acre." A plot was fenced off with coral rock. At one side was a grave, protected by a close reed paling. I took off my hat, and would have placed a flower there, had there been any at hand. Here lay the missionary's first-born. We might envy him his lot of ease and freedom; but in those islands deadly disease haunts the stranger, the weak, and the infant. European children born in the tropics are always sickly: each family must give its tithe to death. It was sad to witness the forethought in the large space enclosed as the missionary's own burying-place. Outside this there were a dozen graves of Christian natives. They were all covered with coral rock, and one or two had shells placed upon them. Otherwise there was neither headstone nor name to denote who lay beneath.

A mile further on, and we came to Old Frank's. For an ancient "beachcomber" he was pretty well fixed. He was building himself a new house, with plastered walls, thatched roof, and broad verandah. Little Emily was pleased to see me again. Frank had a good patch of land cleared, on which maize

was growing. Not that it was to be supposed he worked himself. He had two or three labour boys, who, I dare say, had a more or less bad time of it. In the New Hebrides there is no law, no government; and every man can do that which is right in his own sight. I refused to buy out Frank, land, improvements, squaw, and piccaniny, for £250, which he calculated would provide him with enough square gin to last the remainder of his days. Frank was "powerful" on gin. He once had a hundred cases entrusted to him to trade with. He sold fourteen cases, and drank the balance, eighty-six! The end of our afternoon's walk was Rahnie, a plantation long settled there belonging to the New Hebrides Company. There were some fine crops of maize, which would give ninety bushels to the acre and two crops a year. The process of cultivating this was simple. The land was cleared, the grass burnt off, and the seeds were hoed in. The soil, the rain, the dew, and the air and the sun combined, gave a happy result. The soil was merely pulverised coral, with a mixture of vegetable matter, which, it seemed, would grow almost anything. There were some fine avenues of cocoanut trees, and Captain Macleod was planting them everywhere. Copra at £20 a ton in London* paid better than raising maize. At seven years the cocoa tree bears, and from thence for eighty years the nut is valuable as an article of commerce. At Rahnie, I saw one of the finest banyan trees in the world, in whose heights a house might be built *à la* Swiss Family Robinson. There were a number of labourers at work on this estate, which had a frontage of two miles and a half to the beach, and ran back to the mountains. If this were a sample of the soil of the New Hebrides, and if it would last, and not become impoverished, the islands were certainly worth annexing.

A drink of fresh cocoanut milk, and we took the homeward track. Between the mission station and the store we had an instance of the old heathen way of life, as contrasted with the missionary cult, evidenced in Dick's action and the mild way in which it was taken by his congregation. On the shore we came on a native sitting on a beached canoe, and keeping a watchful eye on the tracks landwards. A cocked rifle leant against a tree two paces from his hand. Round his waist was a belt filled with cartridges.

* See page 189.

Otherwise, he was only clad in a pocket-handkerchief, well-made armlets, and garters of beads, and a gorgelet of pearl shell. His hair was artistically dressed with a wooden comb stuck therein. A muscular, well-made man, with a lurking devil in his eye, whose formidable get-up would be apt to make nervous people feel for their shooting-irons. He was very civil, however, was "Charlie," and answered all my questions in good English. He had been in nearly every part of Australia. A labour boy first, he had of late years shipped as one of a boat's crew. Captain Macleod told me he could get from £3 to £4 a month. His gun and ammunition he purchased in Queensland. The few houses which they called a village, close by where Charlie lived, were inhabited by families who had "seceded" from the missionary followers. It was a sort of Adullam. Charlie was sitting there watching the track, as he was in deadly fear. A few weeks back he had paid a visit to one of the "bush" tribes inland. A dashing and a travelled man, he had seduced the affections of one of the wives of a chief, and borne her to his home in triumph. But Menelaus and his friends had made such preparations for revenge, that this Vaté Paris had sent Helen back. Still, however, they breathed vengeance, and so Paris day after day was waiting for an attack. Till nightfall he sailed the water in his canoe, and remained on the shore when he returned until quite dark. No Kanaka would travel then; they were afraid of all evil spirits, of the ghosts of their ancestors, of the unknown terrors which the shades may conceal. They are afraid of the dark, even as children are, as in their mental development they are but children. Charlie Paris was receiving the reward of his misdeeds in having a good scare after having given up his paramour; whereas Preacher Dick still stuck to his female property. The one knew that according to the old order his life was forfeit; the other could only have reproof from the missionary. It was a strange problem thus presented on my first day on Vaté. I promised Charlie to go and see him. I fancied he could tell me something about the labour trade. "Good-bye, Charlie," said Captain Macleod; "but look here, if you come near the store with that rifle and that belt on, I'll give you a hiding." Charlie grinned, and said "Yes." We wended our way homewards to what I considered a well-earned drink and dinner after an eight-mile walk under the tropical sun.

I interviewed the captain as to the feeling *re* annexation. Said he, "Some time back we would have liked any country to annex it. There were more white people here then, and we wanted law and order, and to obtain proper legal titles to our lands. As it is, some are registered before consuls in Fiji and New Caledonia, some in the court in Queensland. All purchases made from the natives by the New Hebrides Company have been witnessed by Lieutenant d'Arbel, and even if England should annex the islands they could not upset our titles. There was a talk once of setting up a government of our own, and if we could have found any sort of a decent nigger to put at the head, we would have had a limited monarchy, the same as in Fiji. But there isn't a chief here who has power over half-a-dozen families. You saw the best sample the mission can turn out. So we had to give that up. As ours is a French company, I would like to see France annex the group. We should be able to get labour then, and not have the islands depopulated by Queensland 'slavers.' There are abuses in the labour trade, especially in Australian vessels. I ought to know. The Queensland Act is all right; but it is impossible to carry it out fully. All this would be stopped if we were annexed to France. No recruiting for Fiji or Queensland would be allowed then. The different treatment we in the islands have received from English and French officials makes us think more of the latter. English men-of-war never come here except to persecute or prosecute somebody—never to protect our lives and properties. The officers treat us like "beach-combers," not even with common courtesy. The French officers are always kind; if any white settler were sick, the doctors of their vessels would attend him. Little things have an effect upon people. Do you know that last year a document was signed by every white person then on the island—English, French, and American—praying France to take possession of Sandwich Island. You may write against it as much as you like, but you can't stop it. French interests are superior to any other in the islands now. What has Victoria got to do with the New Hebrides? She never sent us any settlers or any capital, only one missionary. It is amusing to think that that colony should attempt to annex us."

Captain Macleod, who for very many years of his life had

traded in "labour" to New Caledonia, was certainly a very good authority on the subject. He had always borne—and few men are better known in the islands—a character for humanity; and it was said that he would take the part of the natives against the whites in any case of ill-usage. He strongly condemned the Queensland labour traffic, since, having assumed such enormous dimensions, it could not be kept under proper conduct. But, then, it was the policy of the New Hebrides Company, and of the gentlemen whom Captain Macleod was associated with, that all labour should be kept for New Caledonia and the islands. The "slavery" would then be only under the French flag. Would the natives be better off then? I question it. If the New Hebrides Company found a difficulty in obtaining "boys" to go from one island to work on another—and they preferred to go to Queensland—it was, I suppose, because they knew from the experiences of others that the Australian colony presented greater inducements. I like to give the opinions of old settlers instead of my own. I must note, however, that Captain Macleod stated that the Fiji labour vessels were fairer in their treatment of the natives than those from Queensland.

Certainly, under my own observation, there was a heartless case of cruelty on the part of the captain or agent of the *Hopeful* from the latter colony. This vessel, which had been recruiting in the islands, had cleared out of Havannah Harbour, leaving on the beach a sick boy from Api, who had been engaged as one of the boat's crew. I suppose it had been found that he would be no good to work, so he had been simply placed ashore to live or die, with nothing but two mats and a lamp to assist him in either operation. Most possibly he would have died, but that "Black Harry," whom I have previously mentioned, had seen him, and had passed not on the other side, but had played the true Samaritan, and was now tending the poor fellow to as much health as he would ever have. Harry Palmer was a white man at heart. Many people he had succoured who had been cast adrift on this island. For many years he was managing a property here for Mr. Bassett, of Sydney, which was afterwards bought by the New Hebrides Company; but Harry having some sort of lien on it for services, he was allowed to remain in possession for a time. It might be that the skipper of the *Hopeful* would urge that this boy wanted

to be put ashore; but I could not see that any valid excuse could be produced. The Queensland Acts distinctly say that natives shall not be landed on any but the island to which they belong. Also, that none shall be "recruited" except from their own homes. This latter clause protects the labourers of the planters on the islands, who otherwise might often be willing to run away.

Captain Macleod had a kind word for the missionaries, as striving to do good, and being partially successful. But he, as an old trader in all the islands, said that the natives were not civilised one whit by the Christianity they had got. He did not think they properly understood it. At the reports which for years had been considered to be true, regarding the doings of the early traders, he was very wroth, as being greatly exaggerated. "If I had been a Lord Mayor of London, nothing would be said against me, I suppose. The *Ada C. Owen* came to the islands twice, and the *May Anderson* once, chartered by a firm in Auckland, and loaded with muskets, ammunition, and gin, to trade with the natives. One of the vessels carried a recruiting licence. I suppose a good thing was made out of it. It is the regular traders in the islands, men who, like myself, have lived here for years, who bring the natives into peaceful ways. It is our business to be friendly, and to make them friendly. It's not only a question of life, but of living and making money. My experience of the mission natives is that they won't work. We have taught the natives to work from the commencement, and have always been abused by the missionaries, and the officers of the men-of-war follow suit. Everything which has been written about us has been by the missionaries or their friends. They have had all the say. And now I suppose you are trying to do the Company all the harm you can. Well, I may have my say on a platform some day."

As a "reformed labour trader," I thought Captain Macleod would be a draw at Exeter Hall, and I offered him terms accordingly. I was satisfied of one thing, that his words might be depended on, for he had a fair judicial cast of mind, which made him give every side of the question, even views which might tell against him. His stories of early life in the Western Pacific were very amusing. Even up to late days, I

found well-known "frauds" turning up there. A certain person who travelled as a scientific authority was in Havannah some years back, and went away without paying his boat's crew; and as for "Mac," whom I had left in Noumea, Captain Macleod said, "Yes, I know him well enough, but there's no fear of his ever coming to see *me*. You had a lucky escape in getting rid of him."

I slept in a room in the iron store, with piles of Manchester calicoes and cases of Birmingham muskets by my side. Although during the day and early night the building was very hot, yet towards morning, at this season of the year, it became cool. A case of dynamite was within a few yards of me, sufficient to blow the building to pieces. I had thought of purloining it in the night, and depositing it in the bay; but then some vessel might have struck it with her anchor, and destroyed everything in the harbour.

Vaté or Sandwich grows upon one. There is an everlasting beauty in its green terraces and grassy lawns, and luxuriance of bush and jungle. Inland, I made a journey up the valley by a track across a broad plain, covered with a thick brush, breast high. Here and there were clumps of cocoanut trees, tall and slender, as in the missionary books, the delight of our childhood. The tree which had been planted, was easily distinguished from the natural variety. The former, set in clearings and far apart, did not grow to such a great height, but was thicker in the trunk and bore more nuts. In a state of nature, as the nut falls, it bursts forth again into life, and struggles upwards, often through dense scrub, towards the sun and light. It has to tower over all the forest trees before it obtains sufficient sun to bear proper fruit. So in the bush the cocoanut is tall, but graceful, and slim as an æsthetic maiden. Onward the path went by banks of brawling brooks, swift and clear as any I had lately seen in New Zealand. The soil was over fecundant, mixture as it was of coral lime and decayed vegetation. A beautiful convolvulus climbed up the cocoa trees and hung down in trailing festoons. The only birds I saw were swallows, pigeons, and parrots. The former have never any occasion to fly south; they don't know what eaves, gilded or otherwise, are, but build their nests in trees, happy in a perpetual surfeit of insects. The pigeons were large green ones, as in Northern Australia; the parrots I had as

yet seen were small. Sometimes we came on clumps of bananas, and glimpses of brown thatch beyond. The villages were only a cluster of two or three houses. I did not go too far up this valley. The "bushmen" were still cannibals, and I flattered myself I should have proved a tempting morsel to them. A large portion of this plain had been cleared, and maize grown at one time; but then that hardly paid. Captain Macleod said he thought of putting English grasses down, and running cattle on it. The Company had already about forty head, who had so much feed that they did not stray far. Sheep had not been tried much in Sandwich, but goats thrived wonderfully, and the flesh of a young kid there was sweeter than lamb. But a good stock of cattle and sheep would have kept down the overgrowth, promoted ventilation, and cleared off the miasma which hung around the flats. As sure as the sun and moon rose, came the rainy season and the fever with it, largely promoted by the thickness of the vegetation. Every one there had the fever, but people seemed to think as little of it as in a more healthy climate one would of a cold or a sick headache. It only lasted a few hours, and an emetic, so they said, put one all right. Stimulants, however, were used by every one, with a good result if in moderation.

There was not much to interest one at the store, except the doings of "Toby," an orphan little "nig." whom Captain Macleod had taken charge of. Three years old was Toby, and he went about the house like a tame cat or dog. He had been supplied with a large handkerchief as a *sulu*, but he scorned to put it to such a purpose. Knotted round his neck it flowed behind in a graceful manner, and with a long reed, held spear fashion, in his hand, Toby was quite a picture. He had a rather fat paunch, and was a great feeder. Not but what he earned his living. Toby early was impressed with the idea that his heritage was work. From morn to eve he was busy at something. He watched the other "boys" carefully, and imitated all their actions without being told. If Toby saw that a thing wanted doing, he was the one to lend a hand, and, giving him credit for intentions, he was a most industrious little nig. If Toby had had a voice and a vote, it would have been against French annexation. For some reason he did not like the nationality. "d—— Flenchmen," was what he called them; having been

taught by some English skipper to use oaths, which to him had no significance. Toby for a day had his doubts about me, as he noted the fluency with which I spoke to Captain Boutney, and he could not judge of my mistakes in grammar. But afterwards he was satisfied that I was Anglo-Saxon: no Frenchman ever spoke English, even Don Juan's shibboleth, as I did, and so Toby was my friend and confided to me his grievances against the "Flenchmen." I wanted to beg, borrow, buy, or steal him from Captain Macleod, but he expressed his doubts as to my giving Toby a good Christian education. I was very much interested in him, as being the only one loyal to the British flag on Sandwich.

My countryman "Dick" Clifton, from Maine, who paid the harbour a visit from a plantation some miles down the coast, ardently desired French annexation. He was only four years of age when he left his native state; but to him Bunker Hill was but as yesterday: he was a true Yankee to the backbone. He despised the commodore and all his doings, and was virulent when British men-of-war were mentioned. I asked him the reason. "I wonder you can say a word in their favour," said he. "Don't you remember Johnson, of New York, being killed by the chief at Aoba in 1879 for giving information to the British man-of-war as to the murderers of the mate, government agent, and boat's crew of the *Mystery?* And when his partner Chafin applied to Commodore Wilson, the reply was that he couldn't take any steps, as Johnson wasn't a British subject. Chafin shot the chief and then cleared out. They didn't ask our nationality in 1874, when Captain H. S. Fuller in the *Hallie Jackson* helped the *Renard* to rescue John Collins, the last of a shipwrecked crew on the Solomons. I was his mate there, and we risked our lives, and Lieutenant Suckling wrote the 'old man' a letter of thanks. You ask Captain Macleod, he's got it." Sure enough, Captain Macleod, who had such a collection of old log-books and papers that I fancied when he had made a few more thousands he meditated authorship, produced the letter to old Captain Fuller (now dead), written as an English sailor and gentleman would write, in terms of grateful acknowledgment for services rendered. I knew that our countryman Johnson had been killed as described; but I suggested to Dick that perhaps Commodore Wilson had not really had the power to interfere.

"Well, Sir Arthur Gordon could have done it, then. But the High Commissioner and the commodore have persecuted every white man in the Pacific, and that's the reason all old traders like myself—Yankee or English—will give a cheer when the French flag goes up. Not that I love them too much, but I believe they'd be fairer to us."

Dick was an ancient mariner, although young in years. He had been trading for a long time in the islands, and represented the opinions of the most numerous class of men there. As manager of one of the New Hebrides Company's plantations, his interests, as well as his feelings, were French. But he could not withhold his admiration of Commander Moore's action. Dick was courteous in giving me his escort to Rathmoy, the plantation of Mr. Robert Glissan, whom, Captain Macleod suggested, I should interview, as the only Englishman possessing property in Sandwich—a gentleman of position and weight, and whose opinions were worth having. We started soon after daylight in the morning, in a boat managed by a crew of five natives. This was Sunday, and no work was done at Havannah on that day. The boys, who were from Dick's plantation, had obtained new coloured shirts and striped calico pants from the store. The latter, rolled up to the knee, like knickerbockers, showed their well-made limbs. They were as fine-looking, clean, and healthy a set of savages as one would wish to see. Each man had had a good feed of yam and bread-fruit before starting. They were certainly good specimens of the way the New Hebrides Company treated its natives. Let it be remembered, the managers were outside all law except such as might be enforced *brutum fulmen* by an English man-of-war. The Company paid its boys £5 a year for a three years' engagement. Captain Macleod's great argument was, that in removing from one island to another the change was but trifling, not more than that of an English labourer shifting from one county to another; and that the natives could do good work in the group without the evil results which he said removal to Queensland had upon them. His arguments were good, but then his interests tended the same way. It seemed to me that the two Solomon boys who were amongst the crew were quite as far from home there as they would have been in Queensland. If, as Dick said, "It was our interest to treat the hands well and make 'em contented, and

return them at the end of the term hired for, when many, after a short spell, will be glad to come back again," it was also the interest of the Queensland recruiter and planter to act likewise.

It was very evident that these "hands" were well treated, whatever the motive which prompted such treatment. Great "bucks" were some of them. The Solomon boys had their noses inlaid with little shells. This mosaic work must have been painful in the initiatory process; but a South Sea male will suffer as much as any fashionable lady to be fine. One man had a great plume of feathers on his head, some were faintly tattooed, and all had the lobes of their ears distended with pieces of bamboo, rope, or shells. Greatest triumph of all, though, was that of a man who had two wooden reels, which had held cotton from Marshall's or Ainsworth's, placed through his ears.

We pulled up the bay towards the north, hugging the shore of the mainland. Banks of coral showed plainly how this island was formed. Groves of cocoa-nuts and bananas were along the beach, but there were no villages. These were over on Deception Island opposite. The inhabitants crossed daily to look after their crops. The coast natives lived on the smaller islands because they were safer there from the attacks of the cannibal "bushmen." Occasionally we passed raised stages on the shore, used by the few industrious in making copra. This copra, or cobra, is the dried kernel of the cocoa-nut, which is exported in large quantities from the South Seas to Europe. The oil is there pressed from the nut, and the refuse employed in the preparation of cattle-food. It is the most valuable staple article of commerce in the Pacific. In making it, the kernel of the nut, divided into three or four parts, is exposed on stages to the sun until sufficiently dried. About £7 worth of "trade" is given to the natives for a ton, which is worth £13 in Noumea, £15 in Sydney, and £20 in London. This leaves a good margin of profit for all concerned. The natives of Sandwich, however, are very lazy, and when the thousands of trees which Captain Macleod had planted on the lands of the Company bore fruit, he would have principally to trust, as now, to labour boys from the other islands. We pulled out through the "boat passage" from the harbour, and were in the straits between Sandwich and Muna, or Montague Island. These were about nine miles

broad. This was a glorious Sabbath excursion. Through the clear waters one saw the ever-varying colour of the coral reef beneath; gorgeous submarine gardens and grottoes, through which the pilot and the parrot fish darted swiftly. Here, too, was the beautiful sea-snake, curling about in graceful forms, a band of blue and yellow, perfectly harmless, although some of the natives were afraid of them, and foolish travellers retailed the story that they were dangerous. The sea was smooth as glass. One could have rowed in an outrigger between any of the islands one saw to east and west and north and south. On the shore the coral cliffs stood up abruptly. The change from their glories beneath the waves to dull rock covered with creepers was remarkable. Sometimes I was reminded of Lake Manipori. Everything was beautiful.

But a wind suddenly rose, and the scene changed. Our boys were plantation hands, and not much used to a boat. Wind and wave were against us, and it was a question if we could reach our port that day. Dick Clifton proposed that we should run ashore, and walk the rest of the distance, and I adopted the suggestion. The beach, which afar off seemed white sand, was a mass of broken coral, beautiful fronds and sprays, bruised and destroyed by the pitiless action of the waves in the hurricane season. We passed a village surrounded by a small fence. There was a large shed there, which, I was told, was the church. Some new houses were being built, larger and superior to any I had yet seen in Sandwich. A native preacher had charge there, and he was reported to be very earnest in the work, and to have made many converts since Mr. Macdonald's departure. I asked a woman if she could get me a boy or man to guide us through the woods to Mr. Glissan's. "No man he go Sunday," was the reply, and she looked, as one sitting in the seat of the scornful, at us—the Sabbath-breakers. I thought of the Blue Laws of Connecticut, and we passed on. Here there was but a small extent of flat land between the coral cliffs and the beach. It was all cultivated after a fashion. The undergrowth was cleared away to an extent, and the yam patches were fenced to keep out the pigs, which were running about fat and plethoric, grunting their indignation at being disturbed on the Sabbath. We struck the beach again, being afraid of getting bushed. A canoe was

just landing. It had a white calico sail, and a handkerchief—used as a small flag—was flying at the mast, and presented a device which I found to be a picture of the Sydney Exhibition. Two natives landed, one evidently the chief, nearly nude, but with worked garters and armlets, an elaborate headgear, a carved club, and a double-barrelled gun. As his nostrils were not sufficiently large to suit his idea of beauty, they were distended by pebbles placed therein. A thorough heathen this, or he would not have been out sailing on the Sabbath. I called him "Uncle," and spoke pleasantly to the benighted one, who, I found, also rejoiced in the name of "Charlie," like Paris on the other side. He was affable, and gave instructions as to the road to Mr. Glissan's. Then he said, "You stop?" meaning had I ever been there. "No." Pointing to our crew, Charlie continued, "No boy he stop?" "No." "Me go along a you," said heathen Charlie, good-naturedly. It might be that Charlie expected thanks and *kudos* for conveying such an eligible-looking visitor as myself to the planter's house; but the fact remained that he good-naturedly volunteered to assist us, whereas in the Christian village, Dick told me, "You might be dying of thirst, and they wouldn't get a cocoa-nut for you on Sunday."

We started off in single file through the bush, by yam patches, banana clumps, cocoanut groves, and past another collection of half a dozen houses which constituted a village or a town. Outside the fence there was a cleared space shaded by great trees like those I saw at Bau, near the ovens where human bodies were cooked of old, and where the late lamented Vunivalu of Fiji ate up most of his enemies. Here, too, within a recent date, they had cannibal feasts and danced unto Baal and Moloch. Scoffer that I am at the puritanism of the creed taught by the missionaries, let me give every credit for the change they have wrought in the people of Sandwich; at least, amongst the "salt-water" tribes to which they have had access. On a knoll in this green there were some heathen symbols standing, like the cromlechs of Brittany, a mute protest against the new religion. Five hollow logs placed on end, quaintly carved and fluted, were the drums which of old gave forth the music for cannibal feast and dance. One had fallen to earth, and weeds had grown up around. I beat them with the knob of my umbrella; each gave out a different sound,

from deep bass to a muffled treble. Heads peeped out of the houses, affrighted. Had the old gods come to life again? Charlie, the heathen, laughed, and eyed me approvingly. I was not altogether sure as to the tastes of this Samaritan of ours! We made our way over fences, along paths overgrown with rank vegetation. Banana trees were choked with weeds—the people here worked but little. Nature provided them with everything they wanted in return for the smallest possible amount of exertion. Over morasses bridged by a single log or by stepping-stones of coral rock. My boots slipped, and I was in considerable danger of getting bogged. Anon, under an arbour some hundred yards long, cut through the cotton-wood, a cool shade in the hottest day. At one part of the track there was a large bunch of bananas hanging from a tree, for any by-passer to refresh himself withal. Evidently a land of plenty. The fruit was grateful to my parched palate. A three-mile tramp, and we ascended the hill. The land was far differently cultivated now; banana and cocoa-nut trees lined the path. There was a large patch of ground under maize, which Dick said would give *three crops a year, and* 150 *bushels an acre.* This Siveree estate possessed an excellent situation and magnificent soil. The house was about 350 feet above the sea-level by an easy road. *En route* I managed to interview Charlie, independent and heathen as he was, on his views of French annexation. His English, learnt in Queensland, was fair; but, like Toby, he was fond of adjectives; like Toby, too, he did not want anything to do with "d—— Frenchmen."

Mr. Glissan's homestead at Rathmoy was a building eminently adapted to the climate. The thick walls were formed of a concrete of coral lime, and the roof was of thatch. A broad verandah ran round the house. The garden was well cultivated, containing some magnificent specimens of crotons, of which no less than twenty-four different varieties were found on this island. The walks were of crushed coral. There were trophies of shells, and there was a general care in the surroundings which spoke of a refined feminine taste. There was, too, a beautiful outlook over sea and land. How was it that I was reminded of Invermohr, where I spent pleasant days with Senator Nelson during my sojourn in British Columbia, several years ago? I puzzled my brains in trying to solve

the connection. Then I saw that those two places—so beautiful, yet so different—were mentally joined together, as both in their names perpetuated memories of the loved homes in Ireland. We were received most hospitably, and Mrs. Glissan busied herself in preparing a welcome breakfast, including fragrant coffee grown on the Siveree estate, and fried jungle chicken, young of the domestic fowl running wild in the woods, and shot by the "boys" in the coffee fields. It was very like pheasant in its flavour. Mr. Glissan was an old Queensland pioneer. He had been settled at Siveree for some twelve years, and his opinions were worth having. Conversing on the annexation question, he expressed himself favourable to French rule. It would give the residents here law, order, and protection. He would prefer a connection with the colonies, but certainly not with Fiji. The statement that "the powers of the High Commissioner would be enlarged," he viewed with mistrust. His view, as that of every man I had met with in the islands, was that the powers of the High Commissioner had only been used in a one-sided way, to the annoyance, persecution, and prosecution of British subjects, never to their protection.

Mr. Glissan had had trouble with the natives. On one occasion a "mob" of them surrounded his hill plantation of Seaview, with the intention of killing him. As he was on the alert, however, they retired, and murdered and ate one of his labour boys from another island. A year before a "bushman" had presented a musket at Mrs. Glissan in the garden, with the intention of intimidation and robbery. The "salt-water" men, by whom he was surrounded, and from whom he bought his property, were, however, friendly enough. They were the inland tribes, enemies of the men on the coast, who annoyed him. The trouble was now, however, all over. The people round about had nearly all become Christian—over one hundred converts having been made by the native preachers since Mr. Macdonald's absence. There were only seven heathen left! of these my friend Charlie was the chief. He had always been very friendly to Mr. Glissan, and proved himself good-natured to me to-day; otherwise he was rather a "hard case." Charlie made himself celebrated a short time back. Having bought, after the fashion of the country, a new wife, he sold his old one; as, according to his own account, although willing enough to keep two, they quarrelled and disturbed his

domestic peace. The new husband and the cashiered Mrs. Charlie engaged in a labour vessel for Queensland. Charlie was very wroth when he heard of this, as he concluded he ought to have had a share of trade—presents given by the recruiting agents—for his wife. The new husband had got the best of the bargain; so Charlie went to the missionary with a pitiful tale that the labour vessel had stolen his wife. The matter was communicated to Queensland, and the woman sent back to Charlie; the new husband—her rightful possessor, according to island law—remaining in service in the colony. Mr. and Mrs. Glissan told me that all the complaints we heard about women being "stolen" were of the same kind. They went willingly enough; but their proprietors had either not been paid, or, as they thought, insufficiently paid, and raised stories of their wives being stolen. Women, in fact, were slaves and property everywhere, under the old dispensation in the islands.

Mrs. Glissan, as an observant lady would have done, had found out a great deal about the feminine natives which would have escaped a man's notice. Coming here with the usual English idea that the islanders were down-trodden and oppressed, and full of sympathy for them, she had gradually been compelled to alter her opinion. She found neither truth nor gratitude in them. In none of the dialects was there any word to represent thanks! Mrs. Glissan said that the natives at the neighbouring mission on Muna Island had disgusted her by their want of acknowledgment of the way in which Mrs. Milne had worked amongst them. "They are untruthful, lazy, and ungrateful. The more you do for them, the less they will do for themselves," was the verdict of this English lady, who had been twelve years amongst them. She told me some curious instances of female native customs on this island. The strangest, perhaps, was that when a girl was betrothed, her mother never again looked on the face of the prospective son-in-law; she always avoided him. If by accident they met, the mother-in-law turned her head and covered her face with her calico wrapping, if she possessed such a thing. I suggest that this custom is one which many an unhappy Benedict would hail with pleasure, if it were introduced into civilised life. I believe it would increase the percentage of marriages.

We went and viewed the estate, the flock of goats, the

turkeys, the fowls, the ducks and geese. The property consisted of 10,000 acres. On the lower flats maize was grown, with yams and bananas as food for the native labourers. Mr. Glissan had seventy acres under coffee, and was rapidly clearing and planting the berry. The coffee of the New Hebrides, as I knew by what I had drunk, was of a very superior quality. It was a good paying crop too, and could be picked twenty months after planting. The yield in that virgin soil was something enormous. One patch of thirteen acres the previous year brought six tons. The coffee fields were at Seaview, one thousand feet higher than Rathmoy, and some two to three miles distant. There was a good and easy road, however. It reminded me very much of the ascent to Mr. Adolph Joske's plantation on the Navua River, Fiji. A coffee plantation in full bloom is one of the most beautiful sights in the world, the contrast between the snow-white flowers and the deep green of the leaves on the shrubs, on these slopes, was worth climbing to Seaview to witness. But more than this rewarded my gaze. The blue Pacific was at our feet, dotted with a dozen islands of all sizes. Muna, Pell, and Hinchinbrook were beneath us, Mataso was thirty miles off, and near it the Monument, a great rock 500 feet high, home of the seagull, against whose base the waves dashed on a girdle of white foam. The three hills of Mai were in the distance, Api loomed beyond, and far in the horizon there was a faint cloud, not larger than a man's hand. It was not rain, but the smoke of the great volcano of Ambrym, a pillar by day and night for sixty miles around. I not only envied Mr. Glissan the magnificent property he had there, but I admired the pluck and enterprise evidenced in developing it. In this, as he put it, he had never been aided by, or received any benefit from, English authority in those seas. And so he would not lament—nay, would welcome the hoisting of the flag of France.

The shades were falling as we took our boat, which had been brought round to the creek at the foot of Rathmoy, on our return journey. The wind was all in our favour. Sailing through those seas on such a night—the light of the full moon above us, phosphorescent gleams all around—all life and nature seemed an idyll. The quaint sayings and tales of island life told by my friend Dick made the time pass pleasantly, until at 9 o'clock we were at the landing-place, to find steam up on the

*Calédonien*, and Captain Macleod waiting for me. I had made arrangements to go to Ambrym, as I wished above all to learn the true history of the action between the sailors of the *Dart* and the natives. Dick saw me on board, and gave me the last word of advice:—"Don't go ashore without your shooting irons." The order was given, "*en route*," and we steamed out of the harbour; and once more I lay on the cabin floor, and dreamt that I was in Belleville or Montmartre again. It was the familiar odour of garlic hanging about the pillow on which I reposed, that brought to my memory in sleep the days of the Commune and the sons of liberty, who consumed so much of the bulb which maketh him that eateth it repugnant to his fellow-men.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### AMBRYM.

In the morning we were off Api, an island about the same size as Sandwich, some seventy miles in circumference. It had more mountainous country, and was thickly wooded, but one missed the verdant terraces of Vaté. Api has a bloody history. The people were, and are still, cannibals; and many massacres of white people have taken place there. There were three copra stations belonging to the New Hebrides Company. The missionary and his wife completed the total of six white inhabitants. The mission house, in a little bay south of a point marked as "Foreland" on the chart, looked from a distance a charming retreat. Just past this we stopped to communicate with the manager of a copra station, who came on board rowing his dingy, a native sitting like a first-class passenger in the stern. Orders were left with him and his neighbour, two miles distant. These men claimed to be Americans. The two traders on the other side of the island were Bourbonais, so, on a *plébiscite*, there would be four votes against the missionary's one in favour of annexation by France. I should see more of these people on my return. We sailed on towards Ambrym, to the right the islands of Paama and Lopevi, 5,000 feet high, a smouldering volcano; to the left Mallicolo, as yet only inhabited by two white men, but which Captain Macleod said would some day be the head-quarters of trade in those seas. He should know something of it, as, so long back as 1874, he established a "station" there. A cloud was above Ambrym from the ever active volcanoes; but the wind was taking the smoke to the east, and we had a good view of the land.

We were now in the track of labour and trading vessels. Sails were to be seen around the horizon. A schooner bore up to us. It proved to be the *Energy*, of Noumea, belonging to Messrs. Morgan. On board they had one of the four traders settled on Aoba, where as yet there was no missionary. Every-

where I found so-called French interests to the fore. In the afternoon we were off the village of Ballat, where the fight took place. In this island cocoanut trees grew with a profusion which I had never seen elsewhere. The beach and the hill-sides were a perfect bush of these palms. We stopped at Mr. Craig's, at Dip Point. This gentleman, married to a daughter of the late Captain Fuller, of *The Hallie Jackson*, was settled there, making copra, which went to Noumea. Certainly, in the end, most of this found its way to Sydney; but the direct interests of the people were with New Caledonia and France. I obtained a full account of the fight from Mr. Craig, who expressed himself highly satisfied with Commander Moore's settlement of the difficulty. It appeared the murder of Captain Belbin was deliberately planned; as the natives particularly requested that he should come ashore to confer with them. Cowed and disarmed as the natives then were, Mr. Craig said he felt perfectly safe, which before he had not.* Leaving there, and rounding the point, we passed two labour vessels—the *Flora* and *Lavina*—at anchor. The latter had a number of natives on deck, and as we steamed close by, the skipper called out, "Have you any returned labour on board?" "Do you take us for slavers?" replied Captain Macleod, humorously. On to the end of a bay at the extreme north of the island, and we anchored between two vessels, one of which, by her three masts, we knew to be the mission schooner *Dayspring*, the other the *Aurora*, belonging to the Company. The night was dark, as the moon was hidden by clouds; but 3,500 feet above our heads the crater gave out a steady roseate light, beautiful to behold. Not a small affair was this, as the fire appeared to extend for miles above the dip in the mountain which formed the bed of the volcano. A grand and magnificent sight; yet so prosaic is man, that I could only compare it in my mind to the lights of the blast furnaces in the "Black Country," seen from the heights of Barr Beacon or Bromsgrove Lickey. Yet the delicate tints to be seen here could never have been produced from molten iron.

We were crowded with visitors in the morning. Captain Petersen, of the *Aurora*, a worthy Swede, but naturalised Frenchman, who possessed only one hand, having blown off the

* Mr. Craig has been killed by the natives since this was written.

other with dynamite, was early on board. So, too, was "François," the young trader, whose pile of copra on the beach was protected by the tricolor. Two vessels, also floating the flag of France, must have vexed the souls of the worthy missionaries with fears of annexation and inroads of Marist priests. François spoke English fairly, and delighted to air his knowledge of the language. He had lately taken a wife, *Vaka Ambrym*, paying her computed value in pigs. Eight of his relations accompanied him on board as a body-guard. They were all perfectly nude, the bandages they wore only increasing their nakedness. Their hair was artistically done, some of them having had it worked by the aid of oil and fibre into a thousand separate spikes, which stood on end like quills upon the fretful porcupine. In the matter of earrings there was a diversity, but he with the Jew's-harp dangling from his lobe was evidently "a blood." The chief had a belt made of cocoanut fibre and a piece of yarn knotted round his neck—handy to strangle him by. He had a club, but the rest were unarmed. Pipes were stuck in their hair, tobacco in their armlets, and wax matches in their whiskers. Matches, I was told, were as good articles of "trade" as one need have. The laziness of these people was so great that they would use as many as an Australian bushman; they would not move a yard to get a "fire-stick." These savages huddled together and shivered in the slight rain. They followed François into the cabin and admired themselves in the glass. The place became redolent of "nigger" and cocoanut oil. If they had happened to be light-fingered there would have been a difficulty in secreting any heavy spoil; but they were reputed to be thoroughly honest, although cannibals, and given up to bloody heathen superstitions—such as sacrificing young boys to sharks to propitiate the sea demons.

One of the "boys" was very anxious to see Captain Macleod, with whom he had served some time back. I suppose he had forgotten his face, for he seized the left hand, and looked where the middle finger had been cut off by the blow of a savage's tomahawk at Tanna, years ago, when Captain Macleod had barely escaped with his life. Satisfied, the native evinced his joy by feeling his old master's limb, "smoothing him down," which was an Ambrym mode of testifying friendship. Then we were boarded by another trader, who lived a mile or two away

round the point. He was an Irish-American, and was got up as picturesquely as a Texan "cowboy." He carried two Sniders, but told me it was only to satisfy the natives who were with him. They would not venture near their ancient enemies unless they had arms in the boat. But a mile or two apart, and yet there was hereditary feud between those tribes, and often bloodshed and cannibal feasts, though they would never admit that they *ki-ki* man, when questioned on this subject. The first thing which traders everywhere asked about was gin. Living lonely lives in the midst of savages, "the world forgetting, by the world forgot," they were not oblivious of the fascination of square "key brand." When we stopped off Api, the first trader who came on board put the question, "Have you got any gin?" and when the answer was in the negative, there was a drop of the lip as though he had received a seven years' sentence. Captain Macleod told me that in the old days, when he was trading in those seas, he had been chased for days by vessels, the skippers of which wanted to buy gin, which he was presumed to have on board. There are certain restrictions in Queensland and Fiji as to the amount of liquor allowed on board labour vessels—spirits are permitted only as "medical comforts" from the latter place. But, then, thirsty captains and government agents can always call in at Havannah Harbour and obtain "square" at 30s. a case. It is a mistake to suppose that much liquor is traded to the natives. They are not sufficiently civilised for that. My Christian young merchant in Noumea was wrong. I could not have bought land with the hundred cases he wished to entrust to me.

The question of the relative value of "trade" cropped up here at once. The Frenchman and the American both inquired for white beads. There happened to be very few of these amongst our stores, but plenty of red. These, however, we were told, could hardly be given away in Ambrym. Native fashion set the value of an article here. Demand, as everywhere, is the criterion in the South Seas. What a thing has cost in manufacture or exportation matters little. What the natives want is the question. Red beads, I suppose, cost as much as white: here, on Ambrym, they had no value. On other islands, perhaps, red beads were the rage. European clothes, of course, would be perfectly useless here. A fashionable suit would not fetch as much copra as you could buy with a dozen sticks of tobacco. So when one reads

that land or native produce has been bought for beads or gewgaws, which to us seem of trifling value, it must be remembered that to the natives the consideration seems sufficient. They got what they wanted. There is no standard of exchange yet amongst them, except in Sandwich, where traders have been long established. Captain Macleod said he always preferred to pay natives in dollars; then they could go to the Company's store and buy what they liked—and let it be said that they could buy things cheaper there than an English labourer can in his native village. I got a good deal of information from the two traders here in Ambrym, and from the good-natured Swede. The latter, however, had a mania for land buying, on the Company's behalf. I suppose he had dreams of the day in which there would be a rival of the British North Borneo Company, and when he would be commodore of the fleet.

To all these things I seriously inclined until I saw life on board the *Dayspring*. The missionaries were going ashore towards the new house springing up on the hillside. I had also to go ashore to interview them. I landed alone on the beach at Ambrym, in the centre of a crowd of naked savages. There were twenty to thirty men and boys. A few had clubs, which they carried merely as evidence of their rank. Under the new dispensation disarmament was the order of the day. But anyhow, I was secure in the possession of certain cunning and elegant weapons of Colt's manufacture, the last gift of a dear friend in Sydney. I did not think for one moment that they were wanted here, but I remembered Dick's advice, "Never go ashore without your shooting irons." I clapped one old buck, whom I took to be a chief, on the back, and saluting him in the Elizabethan style, led the way to where the flag of foolish but patriotic François protected his copra. Here the women, who had fled at my approach, were gathered together. I counted off eighteen as ugly specimens of womanhood as it had ever been my lot to see —young and old, they were all hags. They were dressed in kilts of *pandanus* leaves, which stuck out like that present fashionable horror, the crinolette, and which did not improve their appearance. Their hair was cropped quite close, and white with *lasi* (coral lime), which they used for purposes of cleanliness. The burden of maternity had been heavy upon

many of them. As I took out my note-book, the lords and masters of these island beauties eyed me askance. Was I a labour trader with designs? Some, however, appeared *glad*. They might be able to work off their old wives and get new ones. By this time we had opened a conversation in Fijian and *bêche-de-mer* English, which is a dialect like the Chinook of British North America. Some of the men came and pointed out several of the women to me. They appeared anxious to sell, but I was not a buyer.

If these savages had any views on the annexation question they could not express them; but I reckon their hopes and wishes were something akin to that of the sailor's who had four wishes to gratify. Having exhausted three, he could only ask for "more rum" as the fourth. These Ambrym natives would, I expect, want "more pork" or "more tobacco," as they don't drink. I walked off with them towards a small collection of huts, which they called a village. These were merely low slanting roofs, into which you had to creep on hands and knees. They were horribly dirty, with an atmosphere like that of the Black Hole of Calcutta. Retiring my nose in disgust, and looking at the men and women around me, I fully recognised the force of the missionary hymn, which I sang in my childhood,

> "Where every prospect pleases,
> And only man is vile."

I was a new species of white man to these natives; not a "slaver," nor a trader, nor a missionary, as I had come from the French ship, and the *Dayspring* had naught to do with any one sailing under the tricolor. They evidently could not make me out, and conferred together as to what mystery this might be. Somebody to make profit out of was their conclusion; for when I expressed a desire to trade for a club, the artless savage wanted tobacco equal to the thickness of his wrist, and four feet long. There was no bargain. Then the chief brought a youth, whom I took to be his son, and offered to sell him to me for two breechloaders, and an amount of ammunition, beads, and tobacco which, according to current market rates, would have bought the whole village. I had no use for him. Finally, they brought me a young girl for inspection; then I thought it time to go and see the missionaries.

We walked along the beach, here a fine black sand, like that at Taranaki in New Zealand, to where a boat was landing goods from the *Dayspring*. Included in these were some casks of "medical comforts," which the missionary would want in this climate. We climbed a bank, the soil still black and sandy—quite a different formation to that of Sandwich. On the bluff above the beach there was a cleared space, where the new mission-house was being built. It was of weatherboard, with verandah and galvanised iron roof. Three missionaries, assisted by the second mate of the *Dayspring*, were hard at work finishing the residence of their new brother, at which they had been engaged for a month. These missionaries were the Messrs. Laurie, of Aneitium, Milne, of Muna, and Michelsen, of Tongoa. The latter was outside in the sun, roofing the verandah, and had a hard task of it. Entering, I tried to be polite in my salutations, but the brethren eyed me dubiously. I was not one of them, and therefore I must be against them. I felt it a compliment to my "get up" when Mr. Laurie asked, "Are you buying labour?" I told them, "not that time," and vaguely that I had "just come up in the steamer from Noumea." Then I was questioned about recent events down south. I gave them the latest news, and darkened their souls with the intelligence that France would take possession shortly. Mr. Milne said "the British lion will have something to say about that." My reply was that the lion's roar in Exeter Hall would not be heard out there. I found the brethren very adverse to all the actions of the New Hebrides Company, which was felicitously described as "a land-jobbing swindle." They spoke also of Captain Macleod in unjustifiable terms, considering the fair way in which he always mentioned their work. I suggested that when France took possession the labour trade would be stopped, and at this they rejoiced.

The brethren in their working clothes did not look more than first-class mechanics. You would never have thought that Mr. Milne, who was trying his best to make a lock fit, was an able scholar; but, according to a letter of his to the Bible Society, printed in the report for 1881, he had translated the gospels of Matthew and John direct from the Greek text into the "Ngunese" language, which, if he had not invented, he had perpetuated, as he was the only white man who

understood it. This was a feat of erudition of which a man might well be proud; but then the question came, what good was all this waste of learning and energy? I was told that there were only 900 people on Muna. Mr. Milne was only nine miles from Vaté or Sandwich, twenty miles perhaps from the station of Mr. Macdonald, where Genesis and parts of the New Testament were already printed and circulated. Three other translations into New Hebridean dialects are published by the Bible Society. At every new mission the pastor has first to learn the language, and then he translates the Scriptures, and gets them printed if he can. If the first missionaries had set to work and taught the islanders English, what a great deal of time and labour would have been saved. If the Marist Brothers can teach the children of New Caledonia to speak good French, surely the children of these islands can be taught English. It would open the literature of the world to them, and be a great factor in civilisation.

The missionaries had a great dread of the Marists coming into competition with them here. Living out of the world as they did, I found the brethren naturally ignorant of current events. They did not know that the Marists had the hardest work to maintain their stand in New Caledonia, and that there was little fear for many years of their making a raid on the spiritual domains of the Presbyterians in the New Hebrides. They also did not know anything about the *récidivistes*, thousands of whom, I told them, it was more than probable, would shortly be turned loose on these islands. If this programme were carried out they admitted their work would be finished. They had fought the heathen powers of evil, but the civilised article would be too much for them. It was, of course, typical of the creeds, that whilst Bishop Fraysse should have spoken to me in the most tolerant manner of the Presbyterian missionaries, they should have been hard and harsh in their comments on Catholics. But I did wish that they would not, to me, an utter stranger, pass such severe criticisms on all other white men in those seas. Every one who was not a missionary they appeared to look upon as an enemy. They seemed to hold themselves apart, and would have no communication, unless forced, with either trader or sailor.

That was the impression which the conversation of these

worthy men gave me, as I sat on a tool-box watching them work, whilst a crowd of natives looked on. There were several Christians from Aneitium who had been brought to assist in building the house, but they were good for nothing but to bear the smallest of fardels. Under the missionary rule it seemed they could not be made to work much more than in their unreclaimed condition. Their "life purpose" was not of the sort blessed by Carlyle. One would have thought that after so many years' connection with the white race, these men would have been of practical use as carpenters, that they would have learnt something of handicraft. But it was not so. On the island of Maré, Mr. Jones had influenced his congregation to acquire useful arts and handle tools, and girls were all good needlewomen, but then, as I have pointed out before, the natives of Maré are superior to any of the tribes in the New Hebrides. These Aneitium boys were only clad in a shirt and a pocket-handkerchief, and I cannot say that they impressed me with their superiority of looks. In Aneitium, the most southerly isle of the group, the natives were all Christians, the mission having been first established there by the Rev. Dr. Geddie, of Nova Scotia, in 1848. The population was not much above a thousand, and was rapidly decreasing. When extinct, the Bible, which in its entirety is printed in that language, will become a curiosity of literature. Mr. Milne, who has been located on Muna since 1870, did not claim more than a third of the inhabitants as nominally Christian; and Mr. Michelsen, who had been three years settled in Tongoa and the Shepherd Isles, said that he had very hard work amongst the natives there.

Whilst interviewing the brethren I watched their work, and also did a small amount of sawing, that I might say I had assisted in the erection of a mission house. It was a fair-proportioned residence, but the timber, supplied, I learnt, from a firm in Sydney, did not strike me as being of first-rate quality. There were four windows and a door in front, and, I presumed, it was intended there should be three rooms here; but at present it was only divided into two. At the back there were two other rooms, one for a store, and the other a dining-room. Everything was in a very unfinished state, and I was surprised when I learnt that the *Dayspring* was to leave that afternoon. The

household goods and stores were piled up promiscuously in a corner, and I could not help saying that it was pretty rough on the young missionary and his wife, new chums, from Scotland. "He's got the roof over his head," said Mr. Laurie; "we've been here long enough." The fact that the new brother was not able to assist in raising his own house might make others impatient; but how he was going to finish it when they were gone I could not imagine. Outside there was a grass hut for a native teacher and his wife, from Aneitium, who would be some assistance and protection. There was also a hut for goats, twelve in number, which would increase and multiply, and afford sweet flesh and fresh milk. Some turkeys, fowls, and cats, I was told, were also to be landed.

Every missionary in the New Hebrides has been settled like this. Each goes thither full of fervour and zeal, and prepared to undergo all hardships in the cause of Christ and Presbyter. But it does seem an abnormal trial that a young, weak, theological student should be sent to the newest mission, amongst savages whose language he does not know, but will have to learn, before, according to the custom of the mission, he can translate the Bible into it. One would imagine the cause might receive greater aid if the bretbren who had been long settled and knew the ways of the natives, like Mr. Milne and Mr. Macdonald, did the pioneer work, leaving to the newcomers their houses, and parishes, and Christianised native assistants. It was certain that, from a material point of view, Mr. Murray, the new pastor at Ambrym, would have a hard time of it. An Australian bushman, or an old South Sea trader, might envy him his camp, and soon be thoroughly comfortable there. A poet would find eye and mind fed here. On the mountain peak above, a waterfall cuts the sky-line; there are glorious bands of foliage on the hill-sides; below, the blue sea is a shining mirror; at night the glow of the volcano affords perpetual reflections of light. But scenery won't help to milk the goats, or lay out the garden, or finish the house, or do the chores until the natives are properly broken in as "helps."

These same natives appeared to be friendly enough. In fact, if they go on as they did then, the trouble will be that they are too friendly. The mob which had followed me swarmed about the house, squatting on the verandahs, and

watching every operation with interest. Perhaps they felt vicariously industrious from seeing others work. Two or three of the boys had been in Fiji, and we managed to hold some sort of a conversation together. The chief felt my thighs, and legs, and arms, manifesting surprise and admiration. Although but a student, I found that my forearm, biceps, and pectorals, were better than those of the chief, who was very "soft." On their "pins," however, these savages were firm enough. I tried to get their opinions about the *kai-wee-wees;* but obtained no trustworthy expression. Mr. Milne, however, volunteered the statement that "all natives hate the French." It is certainly no fault of the missionaries if they love them. I questioned the brethren as to their experience of the difference in returned labour from Fiji and Queensland. Mr. Milne said that on the whole the "boys" from Fiji, if they did not show an improvement, at least were not corrupted; they met with "Christian natives in Fiji," whereas in Queensland they were brought into connection "with low and vicious white men." I blushed for my colour. In pleasant conversation we thus passed some time, until they locked up the house and adjourned to the beach, when Mr. Michelsen, who, as a Swede, was more polite than the Scotchmen, asked me, "Will you not come on board, captain?" I presume they thought I was the skipper of the *Calédonien.*

I gladly accepted the invitation, and on arriving on board the *Dayspring* was introduced as "captain" to Captain Braithwaite. A fine old mariner was the commander of the mission ship, and he received me most cordially. A dim suspicion crossed my mind that he might be glad to see a Gentile for a change. The *Dayspring* is the fifth mission vessel in the Pacific. The *Morning Star* is at the disposal of American missionaries, from Hawaii to the Marquesas. The *John Williams* visits all the stations of the London Missionary Society in the South Seas. The *John Wesley* succours the missionaries of the Wesleyan Methodists in Fiji and the Friendly Islands. The *Southern Cross*, auxiliary screw steamer, is in the service of the Church of England Mission, among the islands of the Banks, Solomon, Santa Cruz, and Swallow groups. In the early years of the New Hebrides Mission, the *John Williams* and the *Southern Cross* greatly assisted its operations, in conveying the brethren and their

stores and mails. Large-hearted Bishop Selwyn on one occasion collected over £100 amongst Presbyterians in New Zealand, and handed it to the missionaries at Aneitium for their use. The brethren, however, wanted a vessel of their own. In 1856 they secured a boat of five tons, which they called the *Columba*, after the saint who is said to have introduced Christianity into the Scottish Hebrides. The *John Knox*, a small schooner built in Glasgow, came out in 1857. But this proved inadequate for their extended work. In 1862 Messrs. Paton and Matheson fled for their lives from Tanna to Aneitium, when, "after consultation with brethren, Mr. Paton was appointed to visit Australia to make an appeal on behalf of a new missionary vessel." This reverend gentleman was powerful in touching the hearts and pockets of the people in the Colonies. He enlisted the services of Sunday-school scholars in collecting funds, and raised over £5,000, of which Victoria alone gave £2,600. A vessel of 115 tons was built in Nova Scotia at a cost of £3,800, which arrived in Melbourne in 1864, bringing three new missionaries and their wives. The annual cost of the vessel was secured by collections from Sunday-school scholars in the Colonies—£1,500, it was considered, was a minimum. For many years more than this amount was contributed from Victoria alone, and so a sinking fund for the insurance of the vessel was started. This *Dayspring* was wrecked at Aneitium in 1873; when a new schooner was bought in Sydney, to which the same name was given. The work of the mission ship is to call on all the stations twice a year, taking stores and mails, also to bring the brethren to the annual meeting of the mission synod, held at Aneitium, afterwards taking them home. The financial affairs of the *Dayspring* are managed in Sydney, and the annual cost is about £1,700.

With Captain Braithwaite I exchanged reminiscences of many old traders in the South Seas. I knew personally, or by name and reputation, most of the "old shellbacks" sailing from Fiji, New Caledonia, or Queensland, and so we got on very well together. I was introduced to Mrs. Braithwaite and Mrs. Michelsen, and asked below to take "a plate of soup." I met the new missionary, Mr. Murray, and his wife. This young divine had been only recently ordained at Sydney, after landing from Scotland. He looked a student—one used to burning the midnight oil. In a civilised community I should have taken him

to be a man of sufficient self-confidence; but here, with his cough and weak constitution, I was afraid he would be out of place. The immaculate purity of his shirt-front and neat studs would be thrown away upon the savages. My sympathies were enlisted for the Scotch lady, his wife, who was burdened with a two months' old baby, born at Aneitium. I did not think her husband a man who would be of any use in the house, and with only the "roof over their heads" they would have a rough time in getting fixed. For six months, until the return of the mission vessel, they would be left entirely alone, would see no white face except those on labour vessels and stray traders, and these they had been taught to look upon as enemies. A delicate young minister like Mr. Murray must have had the spirit of an evangelist to carry him through the first twelve months there.

The brethren, who had got into white shirts and black alpaca coats, looked the character now. We had some pleasant conversation. I was particular in my inquiries as to their opinion of the affair at Ballat, where they had been summoned by Commander Moore as interpreters and witnesses. "It is not for us to say," was the only reply I got from Mr. Laurie, in a tone which gave you the idea that he could say a great deal if he liked; but the doings of the officers of her Majesty's navy cannot be criticised like those of traders and "slavers." Captain Braithwaite, as commander of a mission vessel, was, of course, a truly Christian man. He was certainly much more charitable than the missionaries. He did not gird at the other white men in those seas, and had a sailor's sympathy with the gallant action of the *Dart's* men, undertaken to avenge a sailor's death. This ship was run on temperance principles, and therefore we did not get very sociable at table. The brethren in their black coats were stiff and reticent, or it might be they were getting suspicious of my continual cross-questions. I watched the cats getting their last meal in civilisation. The turkeys were brought up, and all the numberless little parcels which ladies, whether travelling by land or sea, accumulate, especially when they have babies. It was time that I took my departure. Captain Braithwaite sent a boat with me to the *Calédonien*. An hour after the *Dayspring* sailed away. That night Caplain Macleod said to François—

"You will go and see the missionary?"

"I'm not Protestant, what me got to do with missionary?" replied the young Frenchman.

"He's a white man and a stranger here," said Macleod; "you *will* call and do anything you can for him, and put him up to the dodges of the niggers. His wife is delicate, too, they say; get one of your boys to shoot some pigeons now and then, and send them to him."

Yet that morning, ashore, the brethren had had no good word for the manager of the New Hebrides Company. "Which was brother?"

It was a disappointment that I had not the opportunity of visiting the great volcano of Ambrym. In days to come this may be one of the show places of the Pacific, when a descriptive guide-book will set forth in accurate figures every particular worth knowing. At present it is supposed to be 3,500 feet high. According to the account of Mr. Craig, it has two mouths in the crater, besides two which are extinct. Perhaps it would be better to say that it has two distinct craters. The largest of these I am told is eight miles round; hundreds of feet below the fire is burning, but there are no eruptions as at Tanna. There is a level plateau on the volcano ten miles long, composed of lava gravel. But the next day, instead of mounting Ambrym's heights, we steamed away at daylight round the point known as "Rodd's Anchorage" to load more copra.

We were boarded early by an old native who they said was the biggest chief at this end of the island. He was a tall man, with features rather of an Arab cast. His upper lip was shaved, and his elaborately-dressed hair protected by a yellow bandanna. Round his waist he wore a series of bands of cocoanut matting, and about twenty strands of old rope, the ends of which hung down in front like the Highland *sporran*. Two great armlets of beads completed the old boy's adornment; these served instead of pockets to hold pipe and sticks of tobacco. A friendly old buck this. He rejoiced at seeing Captain Macleod, and wanted him very much to go ashore, an invitation which was not accepted. The old man watched me dressing with a great deal of interest. The pistol-pockets in my pants surprised him, and he manifested this by a quivering motion of the right hand, every finger extended, an operation which would have made a stranger think he had St. Vitus's dance. The red

flannel belt which I wore increased his surprise, and when I crowned the work by putting on my head a fascinating little smoking-cap, one of my most cherished possessions, he was "knocked" entirely. "He chortled in his glee;" his eyes opened wide, and he nudged the savage sitting on the floor by his side, like a country bumpkin at the play. I suppose I was a real show to these natives, even as they were to me. The old chief had a son in Noumea, where so many of these naked rascals had been taken. He had no fear in coming on board a ship bearing the French flag, and if we had wanted to "recruit" labour then we could have filled up the ship, for Captain Macleod's name was a tower of strength in the islands. The natives swarmed into the cabin and begged tobacco. They admired themselves in our large mirror, and "titivated" their locks. All were nude, with the exception of one boy, who rejoiced in the possession of an old waistcoat. I showed them a picture in the *Graphic* of May 5, representing "Our Artist's Adventures in the South Seas." It was an imaginative sketch, but one which might well be true, the figures and the surroundings being all accurate. The gentleman who had drawn this little thought that, within four months of publication, his work would be shown to, and arouse the admiration of, savages in their native isles. It was the only thing in the paper they cared about. Then I showed the old chief the engine, and at this he quivered immensely. Then on to the half-bridge above the cabin, and I started the steam whistle. He stopped in fear and astonishment. I cajoled him to pull the string himself; with fear and trembling he did so. He surveyed his fellows on the deck below, his hands went up, each finger shook like an aspen. He had to sit down, overcome as he was with joy and pride. And whilst his people below shouted, "*Kalu-kala,*" the whole expression of the chief was as of one whose cup of happiness was full, and who would cry "Nunc dimittis."*

* Both François and the other trader described have been since killed by the natives, as well as Mr. Craig.

## CHAPTER XX.

### TO API AND TANNA.

Up anchor and away south once more. We passed three labour vessels around Ambrym. A boat was going out from one in response to the signal of a large fire made by the natives on the beach. We anchored for the night, and went ashore at Api, at the spot where Commodore Wilson landed some three years ago, cut down a grove of cocoanuts, and accepted twenty pigs in return for the murder of the Government agent and boat's crew of the Fiji labour vessel *Dauntless*. The recent action of Commander Moore at Ballat showed that the British naval authorities in the Western Pacific had changed all that. "Joe," who had the copra station here, I take as a sample of his class. He lived in a native grass-house—far cooler and more adapted to the climate than weatherboard and iron; but of course liable to fire. The floor was of coral-gravel from the beach—dry and healthy. The articles of furniture were few and simple—a rude table, form, trestle, and mosquito screen. Two Sniders, and some trade boxes completed the equipment. Joe had four labour boys working for him, and had also a native helpmeet. Now, this was one of the chief grievances which missionaries urged against traders in the South Seas. But man will have his mate. With the exception of the missionaries' wives, there were now only four white ladies in the whole of the New Hebrides. The other men, to quote the language of the Rev. Dr. Steel, had all "entered into impure relations with native women." I am no apologist for such customs, but to say that this connection debased the natives was absurd; nothing could be lower than their standard of morality. In some islands they would sell you their daughters or their wives. Anywhere you could, after the custom of the country, buy a wife from among the daughters of the land. And the native women, companions of white men, were always infinitely better off and better treated than they would have been by their native husbands. From their standard,

which the missionaries had not yet altered, their lot was one to be envied. They made faithful mates, learnt European customs, to make bread, &c.; and gifted, as many of them were, with fine musical ears, learnt to play well on the concertina or accordion. They would pick up any tune. One Aoba woman I heard play a *mélange* of *opéra bouffe*, Christy minstrel, and Moody and Sankey.

Joe was a most inoffensive little man, who would not quarrel or fight, except for his life. It appeared, however, that there was some epidemic sickness amongst the natives, and there was a prevalent idea that the sacrifice of a white man would take away the scourge. So Joe was in danger of being eaten. Joe's trading with the natives consisted in buying cocoanuts to make copra. They were too lazy to make this themselves; the only work they would do was to look on whilst the women and boys collected the nuts. Joe had to go up and down the coast in his boat to the different villages, for they would not deliver their produce. It cost the traders, he told me, about £4 a ton to make the copra, for which the New Hebrides Company paid them £9 a ton. They had also a small salary, and land on which to erect houses, &c. A man could make £18 to £20 a month here, and himself do very little work. It was a free and easy life, like that of a New Zealand rabbiter, only the copra trader had his mate, and if he occasionally gave way to the seductions of square gin, that was not so pernicious as some of the whisky of Otago and Southland. Men like Joe, who mingled freely with the natives, learnt a great deal of their ways and habits. He had his house crowded with those square cedar boxes which in Queensland, Fiji, and New Caledonia are the specialty of a returning labour boy. His first proceeding is to buy a musket, or rifle, and then a box, which he cram̃s with as much ammunition, tobacco, and beads as his purse will afford to buy. A pair of pants and a couple of flannel shirts are generally included. Arrived at his native island, he tries to do the grand in these at his first "*sing sing*," but his companions, who have no clothes, wearing only a crown of small green cocoanuts and anklets of shells, deride him. The fox who tried to persuade his kind that it was the correct thing to go without tails, didn't have a worse time than the nigger who endeavours to set a fashion in dress. They are conservative these people, and dress

they will not have. So the travelled one, mocked on all sides, retires to sulk and cry, and will sell shirt and pants for a stick of tobacco each to Joe or any other trader. Having nothing to put in his box now, the other contents having, perhaps, been divided by a family scramble, that follows suit. Hence, Joe told me, the shirt and pants he wore were bought from returned labourers, together with a pile of boxes, all for a stick of tobacco.

They had a "*sing sing*" near here at night, at which I assisted. This is something analogous to the Fijian *meke*, the Australian *bora*, or the *pilou pilou* of New Caledonia; but in some respects it resembles the feasts of the North American Indians. They dance to the music from the hollow drums which some travellers describe as idols and gods. There is also a ringing accompaniment from the shells round their ankles in the manner of the Australian blackfellows, who with their limbs gartered with wattle leaves keep a rustling time during a *corroboree*. I saw this at Beltana, South Australia, twelve months ago. A tribe give a "*sing sing*," and invite their neighbours. All arms are *tabu*. There is the song and the dance, culminating, as a special attraction, with a slaughter of pigs. These people are so fond of bloodshed that the making of pork is an honoured amusement with them. The pig is hoisted up on two forked sticks, and its brains first knocked out with a club or old gun-barrel. The carcasses are distributed amongst the invited guests. Each tribe vies with the others in the endeavour to provide most pigs. In the bush inland, human bodies are served up at a "*sing sing*." When there is to be any great fashionable gathering, red paint is an article in demand from all the labour vessels or copra traders, and Joe was then lamenting that the life of his cock turkey had been sacrificed by his neighbours, to furnish feathers for their head-dresses at the previous night's amusement. The bush tribes are still cannibals; the "saltwater" men deny that they eat human flesh; but Captain Macleod said, "They all do it on the quiet." They are bloodthirsty enough to make it interesting for either missionary or traders to live amongst them. Not long back they killed one of the labour boys of a trader, and sold the body to the bushmen. Last year a Queensland vessel landed two returned labourers, man and wife, close to this place. Whilst away, there had been some trouble between their tribes and the saltwater people.

They were surrounded and killed, and their bodies sold to another bush tribe. Human flesh, it seems, is always marketable here. A white man's carcass fetches a high price in the market. When these facts were explained to me, I did not wonder that Mrs. Joe, who was very confidential, and chattered away in broken English, said, "Me want Joe go; men Api make *ki-ki* me." *

We sailed early, and passed the *Dayspring* lying off the mission residence. It was late when we entered the pass between Deception and Protection Islands into Havannah Harbour. All was deep gloom except over the settlement, where "a hole was burnt in the night" by a bright and rising flame. "The store is on fire," said Captain Macleod; and I began to think of native risings and massacres, and of my good luck at being "well up" during such startling events; but shortly we saw that the fire was away on the plains at the back. The tall cocoanut and ivi trees stood out against the fiery background, and the clouds of smoke which rolled along brought with them a fragrant smell of burning wood. It was a grand sight; but one in which there was nothing particularly startling. We cast anchor near the hulk, when a boat from a schooner alongside boarded us, and I was saluted heartily by an American voice. Years ago I read, in a book or magazine, an article by the Earl of Pembroke, a description of men and manners in Levuka. One paragraph said, "This fair-haired young fellow is a wreck drifted from the tempest of the American war. Literally a wreck, for he left a leg on the field of Chancellorsville, where gallant Stonewall Jackson lost his life." I wondered vaguely at the time who this could be, little recking that I, too, in due course, should sit in front of the Levuka Hotel, and criticise men as the earl did; that I, too, should lie on that sofa in hospitable Parker's back room, and drink brandy and soda, as both the earl and the doctor did; and that I also should be the friend and companion of the "fair-haired young fellow," Captain James T. Proctor, now owner of the schooner *Caledonia*, trading for the New Hebrides Company, The *personnel* of this company, by-the-by, was rather perplexing. In Paris, Monsieur John Higginson, Frenchman; in Noumea, Mr. John Morgan, colonist, but naturalised subject of France;

* Poor Joe and the other English trader I met at Api have been since killed.

resident manager in Havannah Harbour, Captain Macleod, Britisher; and trading amongst the islands, Captain James T. Proctor, now a loyal American citizen. This Company reminded me of the story of a darkey belonging to a Mississippi planter, who was accompanying his master on one of the river boats to New Orleans in the old days. A gentleman asked him, "My boy, whom do you belong to?" He replied, "I can't zackly say, sahr. You see, massa's been playin' poker all night, and I'se changed hands several times."

Belonging to one of the first families of his State, son of a senator of Louisiana, and nephew to General Beauregard, James Toutant Proctor, when the war broke out, was a student at the Military College at Alexandria, of which General Sherman was then president. Mr. Hepworth Dixon, in one of his beautifully written but most unreliable books, attacked what he called the "slave society of the South" as being opposed to the social standing of university professors, looking down, in fact, on all connected with the profession of letters. Now, the oldest university in the United States is that of Virginia, founded by Thomas Jefferson, the second President sent from that State. Everywhere in the South, if we had not the "common" or State school system (for which we had no use), we possessed colleges and universities enough, and the distinguished men who taught there were everywhere received and looked up to as their talents merited. The best men from the North, as well as the South, were procured to teach our children. Thus, William Tecumseh Sherman, then major of engineers, was installed chief, through the agency of his friends Messrs. Beauregard and Proctor, of the college at Alexandria. When the war broke out in 1861, young Proctor was not fifteen years of age. He was not sixteen when he joined the 1st Carolina Regiment, shortly receiving a commission as lieutenant "for valour and distinguished services." He was not seventeen when, leading his company in the second day's fight at Chancellorsville, he was shot through the leg, and the bone being broken, amputation was necessary. Stonewall Jackson at this time lay stricken unto death, but his men knew it not. One would have thought that this would have been enough for a mere boy; but the descendant of the Yorkshire squires, and the Toutants de Beauregard of Provence, came of a fighting race. Hitched up with some sort of a wooden leg,

Captain Proctor served on the staff of General Beauregard till the close of the war. Always a first-class horseman, he was enabled to do good service, and lost another leg—*the wooden one*, however. When Beauregard surrendered to Sherman at Goldsboro', Proctor was sent to obtain the paroles for the staff. He was seated in the adjutant-general's tent, when his old master came in. General Sherman looked with some sort of recognition at the crippled youth in Confederate grey.

"Young man, who are you?" he asked.

"James Proctor, sir."

"My poor boy," said the greatest soldier of the North, "I am so sorry to see you in this plight. How did it happen?" Then patting his old scholar on the head, he continued, "but you were always a wild boy, you know; you would never take care of yourself."

And the great captain took the young soldier to his own tent and gave him wine and mourned over him, and felt, no doubt, in his heart, that the victories he had gained had yet a bitter side, fighting as he had been against old comrades, friends, and pupils.

Since then, however, Captain Proctor has proved himself to be equal to a good many mortals furnished with the usual complement of limbs. The war over, he resumed his studies at the University of Louisiana, and was admitted to the Bar. But, like so many others, he sought his fortune abroad, and drifted to Australia and Fiji, where he became a cotton-planter on the Bâ coast, and headed an expedition against the cannibals of Namosi. For saving the lives of three British sailors in 1873, Commodore Goodenough reported the matter to the Admiralty, who sent Captain Proctor the medal of the Royal Humane Society. Since then he had lived in Samoa and the New Hebrides. He had been a planter in Malicolo, a trader, and a sailor, commanding his own or other vessels. He knew the islands perfectly, and claimed that, with the exception of Captain Macleod, he could go ashore with safety at more places than any other white man. Perhaps no man had been more abused than Captain Proctor by both missionaries and Government officials. He had been libellously described as having "the spirit of a slave-driver, and being a curse wherever he went." I don't suppose any Southern gentlemen would find favour in the missionaries' eyes, although

the Presbyterian Church is the strongest amongst the whites in the State of Virginia. But as Captain Proctor knew a great deal about the labour trade, and had lately been recruiting for the New Hebrides Company, I was pleased to be enabled to make arrangements for a passage in his vessel to Tanna. It was years since we had met, and we had much to say to each other. It was pleasant to be once more sailing under the stars and stripes, and to exchange ideas with an American gentleman. The crew of the *Caledonia* consisted of the mate, "George," whose father was a Greek, and his mother a native of New Caledonia. He was well educated, speaking and writing French and English as well as several dialects of the South Seas, and was a first-class sailor, inheriting with his father's blood some of that taste for the sea which made his race of old masters of the Mediterranean. "Sam," who acted as second mate, was a full-blooded native of Maré, and there was a crew of four boys from different islands. The cook and steward was a Malabar. Two Tanna boys, who had been working on the steamer, were being returned home. They had been receiving £3 a month, but after earning £6 scorned to work any longer. The money with which they were paid off in Havannah Harbour they chiefly expended, after the manner of their kind, in arms and ammunition. Good wages were paid on board the *Caledonia;* the mate received £10 a month, and the crew from £4 to £2 10s. When "recruiting," it was the practice to carry an extra boat's crew of five men, picked up at any of the islands, and discharged when the trip is done. On his last voyage, as on this, however, Captain Proctor had been peacefully trading in copra and supplies for the company's stations.

Only fifty-eight tons, the *Caledonia,* clean as paint and sand and scrubbing could make her, sailed like a yacht. We bowled out of the harbour, past Hat Island, and the plantation of Tuku-Tuku, on the coast. I recently saw the Matukutuku River in New Zealand; there must be some connection between these names; for they are pronounced alike, the last vowel being dropped. Here, through the glasses, we saw Dick on the verandah, and exchanged signals with him. The fresh breeze blew away the seeds of malaria, and the sickly languor which I felt. I had been threatened daily with the fever at Havannah Harbour, and Captain Macleod told me it was ten to one I might

yet have an attack *en voyage*. Pango Bay, or Vila Harbour, was surrounded by low points of land; as one sailed up, two small islands were passed, Male and Vila. The inhabitants of these had a different dialect to those on the mainland, reported to be more akin to Maori. They had their plantations on the main island, and, especially in Male, were bolder and fiercer, would not intermarry with the people of Sandwich, and were given up to the most demoralising of heathen habits. In 1873 a mission was established on the small island of Iririki, off which we anchored. The Rev. Joseph Annand, of Nova Scotia, and his wife, stopped there for three years, but could, apparently, make no impression on the people, as they left in 1876. This island, unoccupied by the missionaries or the natives, was the one respecting which there was a danger of international complication. From a strategic point of view, it was of considerable importance, and it would be of great commercial value as a coaling station. We had no sooner cast anchor than we were boarded by three Vila natives from a canoe. They had some cocoanuts and pork, horribly butchered, for sale. I questioned them as to Christianity, wishing to learn if any seed had been left in good ground, but the heathen replied: "Me no sabe missionary; me no want him. Me want sell pig."

Port Vila, as the settlement in Vila Harbour was called by the French, consisted of the New Hebrides Company's plantation and store, and two independent properties, one belonging to a French gentleman, the other to a Swede. All the other Europeans there were officials of the Company. "Anabroua," formerly owned by Captain Macleod, was a magnificent estate. It was, I was told, 250,000 acres in extent, but only a small proportion of this was at that time cultivated. Indeed, as the land had never been surveyed, it was rather difficult to tell the exact size of large properties. The Company always assessed its possessions in the different islands by tens and hundreds of thousands of hectares; but people who were not shareholders said that when theodolite and chain have done their work, the vast proportions now on paper would be considerably diminished. Monsieur Bernier, the Company's manager at Port Vila, was early on board. He was a tall, handsome French gentleman, courteous in the extreme. This being Sunday, no work was done on the plantation, although in a cannibal island where

there was no church, no missionary near, and no law. So M. Bernier, having the time, expressed his wish and willingness to show me something of Anabroua.

The landing near the small store was not a good one: there was hard coral rock, instead of sandy beach, as at Havannah Harbour. After inspecting some good samples of coffee, and the machines for husking the same, we mounted the hill and my trouble commenced. If I had been shown one acre of maize, one acre of coffee plants, and a dozen cocoanut trees, I could have had just as good an idea of the whole as after having been trotted around for miles. The enthusiasm of experts is remarkable, and M. Bernier was nothing if not an expert. He possessed a practical and theoretical knowledge of tropical agriculture, acquired in the Ile Bourbon, in New Caledonia, and by the study of chemistry. One found here experiments in acclimatisation of rare and valuable plants from the East and West Indies, the Americas, and Africa. M. Bernier was determined to find out what was best adapted to, and would pay best in the climate. Until then he was actively following up the growing of maize and coffee, and the planting of young cocoanut trees, to make copra in the future. I saw about 100 acres of maize and 90 of coffee. The latter was of all ages, and on this comparatively low ground was planted, beneath the shade of trees, the largest of which were left, when clearing the bush, to preserve moisture and keep off the burning rays of the sun. At Canala, in New Caledonia, where, five years ago, I saw magnificent coffee plantations on the fertile flats, it had been discovered that it was a mistake to clear the ground of all shade trees. The new theory was to plant the young coffee shrubs in a forest denuded of the undergrowth. Indeed, M. Bernier was in many places planting the ironwood tree of the Mauritius and Bourbon, which—quick growing as it is—would in a few years protect the bushes beneath. That this island of Sandwich was wonderfully adapted for the growth of coffee was again evident to me here, as at Siveree. The branches were breaking down with the weight of the berry, although the shrubs were being continually pruned. I was shown nearly every variety of coffee—the Mocha, very small in berry, the Ceylon, Jamaica, &c. There was a distinction in the leaves of the plants easily perceptible. As for maize, at Anabroua it grew in such profusion that they hardly reckoned the number of

bushels. There was a perpetual crop. The ground never lay fallow. As soon as one patch was harvested it was again put in seed. So, with "ninety days' corn," it was easy to get three crops a year. And that of the first quality!

We tramped through long avenues lined by banana trees, with cocoanuts between. Of the latter 27,000 had been planted during the previous few years. What struck one here, though, was that with such a vast amount of virgin soil everything appeared too crowded. The coffee bushes were planted too closely, the cocoanuts also, and the corn was too thick. At this rate the soil would sooner or later be exhausted. But I suppose this system was followed on account of the great labour in clearing the ground and keeping it cleared. In this climate, where every useful thing grows in profusion, all useless weeds flourish in the same proportion. The paths along which we walked were thigh deep in vegetation. The coffee fields would soon be overgrown and choked up unless constant care were exercised. Coffee and corn were grown for exportation to New Caledonia, but there were also great yam patches to feed the native labourers, whose allowance was 7lb. a day each. When sixty to seventy hands had to be provided for this was a consideration. This food was varied with bananas. M. Bernier and his assistant told me so much about coffee, that I thought of writing a handbook giving hints for its cultivation!

We saw very few birds in our ramble; of animals in these islands there were none except wild pigs, which M. Bernier told me often played havoc with the yams. There should have been excellent sport in shooting these, but the natives were too indolent to do aught but fire at tame pigs. "Sport," in the true sense of the word, requiring endurance, energy, and "pluck," was an amusement they did not understand. Snakes were found in the bush—ugly black and yellow brutes, generally supposed to belong to the *boa* tribe, but one preserved in spirits which I saw, by its narrow neck and wedge-shaped head, seemed undeniably poisonous. At M. Bernier's, a live specimen of the jungle cock was also shown me. A beautiful bird this, of medium size and elegant plumage. He resembled fighting cocks I had seen in Japan, and I was inclined to think could not be descended from any plain British barndoor fowl left by Captain Cook or other early mariner. Quiros, who discovered the New Hebrides in 1606,

naming the largest island "Espiritu Santo," after the third person in the Trinity, has left it on record that he found fowls and pigs there, as well as goats; but then he says that gold was also discovered in this new "Tierra Australis," which he describes as a very earthly paradise, with a mild and temperate climate. Quiros thought Santo was but part of a large southern continent. He has lain for 250 years in some forgotten corner of old Panama, which, since Morgan ravaged it, is overgrown with jungle, and is the haunt of the jaguar, the sangre, and the anaconda; and naught remains of the wonderful country he described but the River Jordan, so named by him, and the native fowls and pigs brought, it may be, in the first instance, from Malaysia.

It was very pleasant to sit in M. Bernier's verandah and imbibe cooling drinks after our long walk. From the point of view of a cane-bottomed chair and a full tumbler, a planter's life in the New Hebrides was one to be envied. But there was quite another side to this picture. Up at dawn, tramping through the wet coffee shrubs and dank grass, covered with miasmatic dew, my host and his overseers worked hard. It is the damp morning air which gives fever in this climate. Here in Vila this disease was as prevalent as at Havannah Harbour. It was bad that men should suffer, but Madame Bernier and her five children had all been "down" at once with the scourge, and had had to be sent to Noumea to recuperate. Under these circumstances husband and wife had lost their appreciation of the charms of the scenery. The natives, I was told, also suffered greatly from fever. The low islands of Vila and Male, on which they lived, must have been very unhealthy. Before I left we went through the garden and inspected the "hands." There is one essential difference between a Frenchman and a Britisher. Wherever the former goes he will have a salad and *legumes*. In kitchen gardening he is the equal of a Chinaman. If he doesn't work himself, he has the patience to "boss" and instruct others. I have been in Levuka, Fiji, when one could not get a green thing to eat. In Northern Queensland none ever thought of planting vegetables till the Chinaman came. Here, where the climate is nothing if not tropical, M. Bernier had a fertile garden plot, where cabbages, radishes, turnips, onions, and tomatoes grew in profusion. Strange plants, too, were being cultivated, such as the

"alligator pear" of the West Indies, which, unpromising in outward appearance, had yet within the material for a splendid salad.

The labourers, both men and women, were in good form; these were from the northern islands, Mallicolo, Aoba, and Pentecost. They were enjoying their Sabbath holiday in doing nothing, varied occasionally by eating. There were different establishments for married couples, single men, and single women. M. Bernier told me he preferred women to men for plantation work; they would always do more. It was their heritage—what they had been brought up to; whereas, this was the first time many of the males had ever done a useful stroke. They worked comparatively well now, looking forward to the end of their three years, when they would go home rejoicing in muskets, and beads, and tobacco. If the labour trade were ever true slavery, it was theoretically so here in the New Hebrides, where the "hands" were recruited without Government agent or formal contract, and where their treatment, and the fulfilment of promises made to them, depended on the goodwill of their employers—where, in fact, "they have no rights which a white man is bound to respect," where there was neither government, nor law, nor Acts of Parliament, or Congress. Yet, to the credit of the managers of the New Hebrides Company, and other planters whom I visited, I found everywhere the "hands" well fed and contented, not too hard worked, and then for only six days in the week. What more could Exeter Hall ask for?

In the morning a regular fleet of canoes sailed up from Male, and "Little Buttercup" came on board in numbers. Little Buttercup had short-cropped hair, and was very much undressed in a pocket-handkerchief. Buttercup was always accompanied by one of the other sex, but this I was told was not generally her husband. They were thoroughly civilised here, in that it was considered "bad form" for wedded folk to be seen too much together in public. In fact, they carried this theory to the extreme in practice, in that they changed wives when going out to work in the yam patches. Indeed, the morals of the inhabitants of Vila and Male were amongst themselves akin to free love, but with strangers they were in essentials as jealous as Turks. Buttercup was better looking than any women I had yet seen in the islands. She

had rather a Jewish or Maori cast, and reminded me of some of the damsels I had met at Taranaki in New Zealand, when, in company with a Rugby boy, I saw the noble native bloods, in correct European costume, loading their wives and daughters with goods to be carried to the railway cars as they returned to Waitara or Hawera. Little Buttercup sold pork and yams, and was akin to the daughter of the horseleech. She was very anxious to beg the amber silk handkerchief from my neck, and the compass on my watch chain, which she especially admired. When Captain Proctor went down to take his bath in the hold she crowded round the hatch, watching the mysteries thereof, and especially the removal of his wooden leg. Women, of course, knew nothing about politics; but I thought that I could have Buttercup on religion. I found she was a hardened heathen, however. She "no sabes" the missionary, and mocked herself of him and all his works. Her male companions were equal scoffers. They believed in a "devil woman" on Vila, and asked me to go and see her. I declined. With such improving materials to work on, no wonder the mission here had proved a failure. In politics, however, I got a decided opinion from the men. It was that they did not want anything to do with "—— *man-a-wee-wee*" any more than with the missionary.

This dislike which I found the natives everywhere had for the French was founded on a natural antagonism which I had not yet analysed. Captain Proctor put it thus:—"A Frenchman never understands 'niggers.' He don't know how to work or to get on with them. He hasn't patience. It isn't that he is absolutely more cruel, but he gets out of temper and 'bustles' them. And, somehow, they never trust Frenchmen. They always prefer English people. For myself, a lot of slanderers have called me a 'slaver.' Every one of these 'niggers' here knows me, but they have no fear of coming on board my ship. You'll find it the same wherever we go. I never broke my word to a 'nigger' yet. I always paid him what I said I would, and if I should ever tell one that I'd shoot him, you bet he would keep out of the way. So we understand each other, and they trust me a thousand times more than a Frenchman." Let it here be noted that colloquially white men in the Pacific always refer to the natives as "niggers."

M. Chevilliard, whose fine estate was at the head of the bay, had had a little trouble with the natives of Male, and the impudent scoundrels had threatened to shoot M. Bernier, because he would not buy yams from them! M. Chevilliard and Mr. Jack Roden, the other two European settlers, early paid us a visit on board. The former was of the *noblesse*, he toasted Henry V., and the name of the Republic did stink in his nostrils. He had the finest house on Sandwich, and was renowned for his hospitality. When H.M.S. *Nelson* was there a few days before, M. Chevilliard, like a true French gentleman, courteously called on the commodore and entertained the officers on shore. For this he had been bitterly abused in the Noumea press as an "ingrate son of France." The very democratic editor of the *Néo-Calédonien* might have allowed M. Chevilliard to follow his instincts as a gentleman, irrespective of political opinions. Jack Roden was an honest sailor who had been working hard for years on his little plantation, endeavouring to secure a "stocking." He was the oldest white settler in Sandwich, and said he would "much sooner it should be annexed by France than England."

We sailed across the harbour on our way to breakfast at M. Chevilliard's. A score of canoes with white calico sails came racing around us. They were handled as well as any in Sydney harbour, Buttercup being efficient with the steering-paddle. We landed at a little wharf, and scaled the hill along a path gravelled with coral. Soon we came to a flight of concrete steps; at the top we were in the garden fronting the house. Deep borders of flowers, variegated in colour, and rare crotons, bespoke a cultured taste, and a care for one's surroundings which one would never have found in the establishment of a bachelor Englishman. M. Chevilliard's plantation contained about 6,000 acres of magnificent land, only part under cultivation. Copra was extensively made, coffee and corn were grown in proportion, both finding a ready market in Noumea. It seemed at first a mystery how all the coffee could be consumed in New Caledonia, until one learnt that 20,000 rations of the berry were daily distributed to troops, officials, and privileged convicts. Many of these would have been better without it. Much as I love coffee as a true scholar's drink, in the tropics it tends to an undue secretion of bile. M. Chevilliard's house was built

of bricks brought from Noumea. We had a hospitable welcome and a princely entertainment. That breakfast will long remain in my mind, to dwell on when "commons" are short.

It was with regret that I bade adieu to courteous M. Chevilliard and Jack Roden. I was very anxious indeed to see the Rev. J. W. Mackenzie, of Nova Scotia, who had been here since 1872, settled at Erakor, an island near Pango Point. I heard that he had had two good churches erected which had walls of lime concrete, and that there were good congregations and many communicants. These people must have been quite different to the savages in Vila. But we had been there two days already, and were obliged to sail away to Tanna.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### LIFE ON TANNA.

My hard times did not by any means commence on board the *Caledonia*. Captain Proctor was the essence of courtesy and kindness. This trim, scrupulously-clean craft, on which every one did his work knowingly, in which not a word was spoken above an ordinary tone, did not come up to the Exeter Hall idea of a labour vessel. Yet the only white man on board was the commander. He took his watch with the second mate, Maré Sam, and at times, too, you would see him at the helm. Now, as I have referred to Captain Proctor's loss of a limb at Chancellorsville, it may be wondered how he managed to get around on board ship. He had a wonderful collection of artificial legs, useful for all occasions—riding, walking, sailing, fighting—everything except dancing, which, like myself, he now despised. These limbs were made so well that when you looked at the small, well-fitting boots, you could not say which was the real and which the false foot. Captain Proctor halted slightly, but he would have no assistance from crutch or stick, only on state occasions he used the gold-headed cane presented to him by the soldiers of his old company.

Captain Proctor, with one whole leg and a substitute, did everything which most men do with two. He could still swim well, and had saved several lives, but occasionally he found the loss of his limb to be awkward. Thus, a few years back, when trading in the Wallis Islands, he had a complication with the natives, who seized him, took away his false leg, chained him to a tree, and passed sentence of death upon him, which, however, they hesitated to carry out. That situation must certainly have been unpleasant. He was rescued by a French man-of-war, and the inhabitants of the island were fined 4,000 dollars for the outrage. At present he had had about enough of the Pacific trade. He had had more attempts made on his life than fall to the lot of most men. As he put it, "Those who attack me don't

generally come out ahead. I never had any wish to shoot at a nigger. But one must protect one's own life. If a white man shoots at me in Broadway, I shoot back; if a white man attempts to kill me, I have a right to kill him; and certainly the same rule applies here, where there is neither law nor police, and a man's hands must keep his head. I have been greatly slandered, but you see for yourself what sort of a ship mine is. You see that I go ashore anywhere unarmed, and that the niggers crowd on board my vessel, and are friendly with me. They know I never did them any harm when left alone." The commander of the *Caledonia* had a slight attack of fever on our first day's voyage. I also had a feeling of nausea and lassitude, which, as I was never seasick in my life, I took for symptoms of disease. I left Sandwich just in time. Every one there was suffering, but I had escaped as yet. We had to beat up to windward, but the little schooner sailed like a yacht. It was the morning of the second day out, when I was awakened by Captain Proctor—"Doctor, get up, there's a grand view of Tanna. But don't make a noise, George is asleep; he's been up all night." This forethought for the comfort of the half-caste mate, impressed me as much as anything in favour of his captain's kindness and courtesy.

We were three miles off the shore. The sun was rising behind the mountains. From the black sand of the beach there was a gentle slope to a table-land, on which the plains were covered with luxuriant vegetation, and dotted with trees. A grand country this, on which cattle would fatten and corn return a thousandfold. There was a line of scrub, sprinkled with cocoa-nuts, along the shore, some faint wreaths of smoke curling upwards showing the sites of native villages; but these were few and far between, as the largest population was now gathered at the southern end of the island. Afar off a cloud in the sky indicated the presence of the volcano of Yasur. The sea, which had scarcely a ripple where we were sailing dashed over a fringe of reef, with a never-varying resistless force upon the shore. Here and there were passages for canoe or boat. Dim shadows in the mountain gorges, fertile uplands tinged by the rising sun, waving palm-trees, a white girdle of sea-foam—this was, indeed, a beautiful sight. A magnificent country was Tanna, but it had been very fatal to white men; more Europeans had lost their

lives there than on any other island in the Pacific. Plantations had been abandoned, trading and missionary stations given up; until now there were only two missionaries and one trader on the whole of Tanna. Near "Black Beach" Captain Macleod at one time had a plantation, and grew maize. I took him to be as courageous a man as there was in these seas, one who knew all the ways of the natives, not to be easily scared; obstinate, too, as became one of his race, who would hold fast to any place where there was money to be made. But the Tannese proved too much for Donald Macleod. He and his "boys" had to take rifles with them as they went to plough, to frighten the natives from overpowering them by sheer force of numbers. But they were potted at all day long. This became rather too eventful. Although the Tanna man in those days was not a good shot at a long range, he might have improved! Captain Macleod, in his own words, "gave him best." Although the land which he owned here had been bought by the New Hebrides Company, they had not then attempted to cultivate it.

Like the Maori, or the Highlander of old, it was the nature of the Tannese to fight. They were always at war with each other, split up as they were into a hundred small tribes. They were jealous, and sudden and quick in quarrel, bloodthirsty and vindictive, with less respect for human life than any other race in the Pacific. They were still cannibals. Just round this point Captain Proctor showed me a place where he had once landed and found a party of natives round a fire on which they had been broiling human flesh. All left, as if from a sense of shame, when he approached, except one old *gourmand,* who was gnawing the palm of the hand, which I was told by many ancient anthropophagi was the choicest of morsels. They everywhere gave each other credit for being cannibals. We had on board a returned boy, who was going to his village at Port Resolution. When I asked him if he would accompany me ashore with some natives who came off to us in a canoe, he replied, "Me no go, by-and-by make plenty *ki-ki* me;" and Charlie retreated into the hold.

As we sailed slowly along, fires had been made on the beach to attract our attention, and in time two canoes came off and we were boarded by four men. They were tall, fine-looking fellows, quite nude, their hair twisted into a hundred

thin locks, the ends brushed out and drawn back behind like the once-fashionable chignon. Their faces were painted red and yellow. They had large mouths and beautiful teeth, which reminded me of Red Ridinghood's wolf—"So much the better to eat you with." They came on board without fear—a proof that in Tanna they had no dread of being kidnapped. They knew Captain Proctor, and were very anxious indeed that we should go ashore. "What name you sell him?" I asked. "Sell" was pigeon-English for every dealing, and was a term for engagement amongst the natives, even as "steal" was when boys went away without leave of their chiefs, or women ran off on board a ship. These men said that no doubt they could sell us "boy" or "Mary," besides yams and fowls, if we would go ashore, but we did not entertain the idea. A mile down the coast three other men came on board. We heard of three labour vessels which had been there lately. One from Honolulu had recruited four boys. I wondered when they were likely to be returned? The natives all understood the terms of their engagements for three years, "three yam." When the fourth crop came and the emigrants were not landed at their native villages, they got uneasy, and it was perhaps dangerous to "recruit" at that spot. It was notorious that natives taken to Hawaii had not been returned. More than four years ago, too, a number of Tannese were taken to German plantations at Samoa, and I presume, are still there. Captain Proctor complained to me of the iniquity of this breach of contract, and said that he would not care about landing at the villages from whence those natives had been recruited.

The Tannese, however, are willing to kill or attempt to kill at the slightest provocation. Their fingers are ever lightly on the trigger. "Do you see that point?" said the skipper; "just at that village live four men who have promised to kill me, and I suppose they would do it if they had a good chance. Some years ago I hired two boats' crews from there. When they were paid off, one by accident had more tobacco given than the other, and they're going to shoot me for that." A Tanna-man, it is said, will kill you, not only because he hates, but because he likes you. I was told of the fate of Captain Daggett, who was very popular with the natives. They implored him not to leave; and on the morning of his departure

he was shot by the chief most friendly to him! Then they took up the body and buried it, mourning over the grave and killing pigs, as in the case of a chief. I hoped they would not like me too much! There was hardly a spot on the coast of Tanna where a white man's blood had not been shed. At the south-west end of the island I was shown the spot where Ross Lewin was killed. He will be remembered as the first to introduce Kanaka labour into Australia for Mr. Towns.

Night fell on us now, and hid the sloping hills, grassy vales, and cocoa-nut groves. The cloud of smoke above the volcano turned into fire. The light was not equal to that of Ambrym, which was a steady roseate glow, but was intermittent, sometimes flaring up fiercely, anon scarcely perceptible. Again, there was a deep blast from below, a dull roar, flames belched forth, and in the midst great moving masses might be seen. These were enormous stones and rocks cast up from the crater, generally falling whence they came. As we got round to leeward there was a sulphurous smell in the air, and our eyes smarted from the fine ashes which were blown on the wind. We tacked and tacked, but there was little wind, and it was dangerous to get too near, with a chance of drifting on shore, so we lay off and on during the night. The captain and I remained on deck very late, and watched the grand sight. The roar and eruptions continued regularly. This is one of the great vents, a safety-valve for the subterranean fires which lie under the waters of the Western Pacific. When the eruptions from Tanna are stopped for a time, earthquakes follow, which are felt in New Caledonia, and even in Australia.

In the morning we were near Aniwa or Iniwa Island. The bold outline of Traitor's Head on Erromango was visible to the north. Rocky and flat-topped Fotuna was to the west, and Aneitium to the south. Aniwa is one of the only true coral islands in the Hebrides. It is very low, not more than fifty feet above sea level, and only ten miles in circumference. Through the glasses I could see a number of cocoa-nut trees. The 150 natives all told who lived there had enough to eat. I was informed that the mission house at Aniwa was the best in the New Hebrides. It has been erected by the Rev. Mr. Paton, but was then occupied by the Rev. Mr. Watt, of Tanna, as Mr. Paton had left for Victoria. Aniwa, Fotuna, and Aneitium, appeared to have been

for many long years safe for white men, far different from Tanna. The volcano now was quiet, but a pillar of smoke. As we beat up towards the rocky shores of Sulphur Bay, it appeared but a small hill, something like Mount Eden, on which I walked with some friends at Auckland a short time ago.

Port Resolution, some hundred years ago, was visited by Captain Cook, who "hove down" the ship of that name in one of its bays. It was a good harbour until January, 1878, when there was a great earthquake and tidal wave, and an upheaval of shore and rocks on one side of the harbour. Forty feet to fifty feet out of water one can see coral rocks, until then submerged. A genial old trader who lived there then described it thus:—"I had got through two or three bottles of gin, but I didn't think I was drunk till I went outside, and saw the rocks jumping out of the water. I thought I had better go in and have a sleep then, and I rubbed my eyes next morning when I found they really were there." A sand bar was now forming, and every year the harbour was getting worse. I wonder how long it will be before the volcano Yasur kicks up again, and perhaps destroys Port Resolution entirely?

I must say I was disappointed in Port Resolution, both for utility and beauty. The entrance was narrow and hard to beat in, and it was only done by a smart bit of seamanship, with the mate George at the helm. But the "niggers" all knew their work well, and there was no noise or flurry. This was really the quietest craft I had ever sailed in. The commander, as a gentleman, believed in the tone which "the expression 'if you please' imparts;" at least he used the French equivalent "*s'il vous plaît.*" In the hurricane months Port Resolution must be a dangerous place. As we entered, on the left bank, fringed with cocoa-nuts, was a sand cove; round a point the mission station came to view. A background of banana grove and palm trees on a cleared bluff, the house itself, with its thatched roof, well adapted to the climate, was situated on the most healthy spot around. The bay ended in a half-circle, vegetation down to high-water mark, hills beyond, the smoke of the volcano polluting the clear sky, no residence to be seen but the grass house of the trader, built under the

bluff within a few yards of the waves. We were soon boarded by the young Norwegian who resided there. Canoes from each side of the bay followed. There were Sniders in every one: each man was ready to defend his own life or take his neighbour's. Our returned boys, who lived in the village just under the mission, got at their boxes and rifles. They were particularly proud of the latter. Charlie went ashore in a canoe, his box in front. He fired off his Snider recklessly, to let the world know he was coming; he would get into trouble, or kill some one, soon. The savages here were all as naked as those at Ambrym, although missionaries had been established in Port Resolution for twenty-five years. They had their faces painted, and looked as irreclaimable blackguards as one would wish to find. Yet many of them had been in Queensland and Fiji, where "Tanna boys" are always reckoned the best labourers, being hardworking and intelligent. Returned to their own homes, they immediately became heathen in all their habits once more. How is this? I know that the missionaries always say that the labour trade has anything but an elevating effect upon the island natives. *Per contra*, what result has followed a quarter of a century of mission work here?

Our captain was well known here. He had a faculty of remembering natives' faces and names—a good thing to possess in the islands, as it flattered the aborigines to be addressed by their own proper titles. I looked at all these men, whose delight, the outcome of their surroundings and social opinion, was in blood and murder, and wondered much if the world would not be benefited if they were deported *en masse* to Northern Queensland or Fiji to do useful work there. By nature the Tanna man is a fighting animal; he has no compunction in taking life, but, like the Red Indian, he prefers to do it without extra risk to himself. Thus, when three days before one of the "bushmen" had been shot thirty yards from the trader's door, the murder had been effected by three men lying *perdu* in the scrub by the shore. They also belonged to an inland tribe, and a general fight had broken out, in which there would be a great expenditure of cartridges, and a few lives lost. Then peace would be proclaimed, until some other unfortunate was taken off suddenly. I early learnt the special hatred in which the natives of Tanna held the French. Kyhn, the trader here, had offered to buy the ground

around the volcano containing sulphur deposits; thirty-two tribes were interested, and the chiefs had all agreed to sell, but only on condition that the land should never pass into the hands of the French, or the sulphur be sold to them, nor any Frenchman employed in working it. There was an intelligent expression and union of opinion in this, which was more than I had found in any of the other islands. The people of Tanna, bloodthirsty savages though they might be, evidently knew what they wanted, and what they did not want. I came to the conclusion that I would test this, and embody it in a petition to Her Majesty.

Talking after dinner at night, the Captain and Kyhn often mentioned a certain "Juno," who, according to all accounts, was a very nice personage. He was a brother of a late chief in Port Resolution, and, until the rightful heir had grown up to man's estate, was a sort of Protector. He had "put away" more men and women than Dickon of Gloucester, although I think the Third Richard, like Palmer of Rugeley, was credited with over his fair share. However, there was no doubt that Juno was a P.M.—Past Murderer. There were seven duly-accredited deaths at his door—besides those in fair battle—the last but a few weeks ago, when he had been hired by another petty chief to slay an obnoxious native, the price of blood being a woman. The woman was old and ugly, but very useful in the yam patch: Juno was now a practical man, although in years gone by he had been a stealer as well as a slayer of the other sex. Captain Proctor narrated how he once saw two stranger women bathing on the reef. Juno rushed into the water and dragged one ashore; the other took refuge on board the cutter to avoid a similar fate. "I wish I had shot him then," said Captain Proctor. It certainly would have been a good riddance to the society of Port Resolution, where Juno was the *bête noire*. "If you hear of my being killed, he is the one who will have done it," said the young Norwegian. Pleasant this, to see daily the man who you think will be your murderer. Twenty-five years ago the mission was first established at Port Resolution, and this was still the outcome of the heathen spirit which rages around. *Per contra*, let it be stated that Juno had mixed much with white men, had been pearl-fishing in Torres Straits, and had worked for twelve months on Town's wharf in Sydney.

Early next morning, on going ashore, I made the acquaintance of Juno. He was a thin, slight savage, with no clothing, and carrying no weapons. Looking at him by the light of his past history, you saw treacherous cunning in his bilious yellow eyes. At the same time he certainly had an intelligent look. The population of the six villages around Port Resolution was early astir this morning; the males crowded round us as we landed. They were like unto the ancient Britons in that their only covering was paint, and that was applied very sparingly. Every man, though, had a Snider and a cartridge pouch. Mere boys were carrying rifles. Charlie, who went ashore yesterday in such glee, had abandoned pants. He now wore only a calico rag round his loins. He said his people were going to war with a bush tribe. I dare say he was anxious to test the merits of his new Snider. Although the men of Tanna were quite nude, the women wore long petticoats of thickly woven grass, reaching, in the case of matrons, down to their ankles. Young girls wore them shorter. These must be awkward and cumbersome in bush travelling, and as they had no other clothing, the effect was peculiar. Captain Proctor entered into a chaffing conversation with the notables. To Juno his salutation was slightly different.

"Hallo! you black thief, airn't you hung yet?"

"How do you do, Proctor?" said the P.M., no Tannaman ever using the word "Mister."

"Look here, Juno," said the captain, putting his hand on my shoulder; "this big fellow captain, very big fellow captain; he stop here three weeks. You see he all right, or I make *ki-ki* of *you* when I come back." And for a moment the jaw was set stern, there was a light in the blue eyes, what we call in America an *ugly* look. Juno's eyes dropped before it. I felt I might have a worse protection here than the word of this lame soldier of the South.

From the ship the trader's house, with the grass roof and waving palms overhead, looked quite romantic. Near at hand, as in the case of the honeysuckle-covered hovel of the English farm labourer, the charm was dispelled. The verandah was all broken down, the roof leaky, the timbers were old and decayed, the earthen floor and wattled walls were foul and dirty, dust and cobwebs everywhere. From the rear the bluff sloped up abruptly;

rank vegetation was all around. It seemed fitted to breed fever. The repulsiveness of the place showed the absence of any female care. There was one woman, an old hag called Topsy, around, but Kyhn had given up attempting to teach her cookery or housework, and she was employed breaking cocoa-nuts to make copra. Until my advent Kyhn had done all the domestic work himself. We all know the result of this at most men's hands. "You can never live here," said Captain Proctor to me; "you'll be down with fever in a day." So it was arranged that a grass house should be built for me on a cleared space at the top of the bluff, on what was supposed to be a healthy situation. This was only a matter of a few hours, and so I slept another night on board the *Caledonia*.

I shall always look back with pleasure to that last day spent on board previous to casting myself ashore on the cannibal island of Tanna. In my youth I remember being hushed to sleep with the lyric legend of "Hokey Pokey Winky Wum," who preferred his potatoes cooked "with their jackets on," being the "King of the Cannibal Islands." The *sequitur* was never quite clear to me. However, on the following morning I was to be left for many days, it might be weeks, among people who were yet actively eaters of human flesh. And there was not one "Hokey Pokey," but one hundred. One chief I might have conciliated, as the missionaries in Fiji did Thakambau; but who could say how many of the hundred and odd head men of Tanna might not cast hungry glances at my toothsome body? for I flattered myself I should prove good eating. There is no mistake about these Tannese. All authority, from the days of Captain Cook, agrees that they are the most intractable people in Western Polynesia. The Fijians are mildness itself compared to them. The great navigator had to overcome them with his cannon; from the days of John Williams, in 1839, till 1862, missionary after missionary had to "abandon the field" and flee for his life; and white traders, who don't count for much in history, have been killed here by the score.

It was Sunday, but, like King Rufus, who rode to his fate in the New Forest, the natives of Port Resolution "held the day in scorn." The decks were crowded in the morning, although the tinkle of the church bell had summoned to prayers those traffickers, whose only thought was to obtain tobacco and knives.

Maré Sam, our second mate, had, however, put on his best clothes, and gone ashore to listen to or expound the gospel. He was, although one of the crew of a labour vessel, reputed to be very powerful in prayer. But the first commander of the mission ship *Dayspring* was an old blockade-runner, and presumably a sympathiser with Southern rights and institutions; and Dr. Murray, of "*Carl*" notoriety, I was assured by one who knew him well, was a religious fanatic, who prayed and preached with great enthusiasm, ashore and afloat, and also on board the vessels he used in kidnapping.

I early got an idea of the anything but guileless nature of the Tannaman by this traffic on board ship. The natives brought very skinny fowls, yams of a good size, and cabbages grown from seed brought from Queensland, for which they wanted "plenty tobacco" or knives, asking about ten times what they would have received from the trader ashore. One venerable old man, so wise and benevolent-looking, but, oh! so dirty, approached me with a "mummy apple," and asked ten sticks of tobacco for it, when one stick should purchase five! They found their match, however, in the Malabar cook. He beat the sellers down to the lowest market price; he was as mean a man at a trade as you would wish to meet with. Sometimes the natives would come aft and complain to the captain. He sent them back to the cook, who then offered half what he had done before. No women, however, came on board here. Trade over, the visitors had a good feed of rice, remains of our "boys'" breakfast, and then they went all over the ship, except the cabin. They admired the Winchester repeating rifle, which *accidentally* had been left lying on the poop, and the initiated who had served in boats' crews explained to their companions the mysteries of the various ropes. One thing which first struck me with these people was that their chests were contracted, and the youths and boys appeared consumptive. One very decent-looking man, who was a striking exception to the rest, in that he wore pants and a shirt, came on board and wanted to ship to Noumea. He and his wife had both served in Queensland. She was very sick now, and wished to get away to where she could obtain better food. After a course of good living in the colonies, they could neither of them exist on the island diet of yam and *taro*. They would have been willing

recruits to any labour vessel coming round. The man was engaged at the rate of £3 a month, and his wife given a passage to Noumea, where she could obtain an easy situation.

Firing was going on all the day long, as if from the outposts of two armies. A Tannaman believes in using his rifle. As in old days he would hurl his spear into the water or against a tree in pure lightness of heart, so now he shoots at fowl and fish or anything which he can kill. George, the mate, killed with the Winchester a very fine fish, something like the Australian schnapper, which the cook made into a *bouillabaisse* for dinner, over which the captain and I aired our knowledge of Thackeray. George had been ashore in the afternoon, and returned with the advice that I must not sleep in the new grass hut, as the fresh broken ground was sure to breed miasma. I must sling my hammock in the store, and make what shift I could. We talked together far into the night, and at daylight in the morning I was landed, with many tins and bottles of "comforts," which the captain persisted in giving me from his stores. He lamented exceedingly at leaving me there. One last shake of the hand, and the crippled soldier of the South—most unselfish and courteous of hosts—rowed back to his own vessel. The sails were spread, the *Caledonia* glided out of the pass, and I was alone on Tanna, save for the companionship of the young Norwegian trader, Gottfrey Kyhn, whose hut for many days would be my home.

In honour of my visit, he had done all he could to make the inside presentable. Mats were laid on the floor of the centre room, and the graces sacrificed to by new calico having been placed on the rude home-made table in lieu of a cloth. Honest fellow, he did all he could to make me comfortable. I recognised this, and determined that he should not be the loser; but, oh! how often at night I looked back with envy to those days spent camping out on the banks of Lake Manipori, with the pure air, healthy diet, and sound sleep on couches of manuka bush. Except when I was electioneering round the island, I slept here at night in my hammock, slung across the central room—a sort of large hall. There was a door at each end. Windows this residence had none. All day long these windows were open, but were closed and bolted at night. When the sun went down and the lamp was lighted, Kyhn would not sit with open doors to be

a mark for any spiteful or sportive native. After the shades of evening fell he never went outside. By daylight he did not fear the natives. They dared not attack him then, he said, when he could see his foes, and when his "boys" being about also acted as a protection; but at night it was a different thing. It is then that the Tannaman, like the Red Indian, waits for his white enemy. With the record of the past before him, Kyhn was careful. He never slept twice in the same spot, and had secret firing places from which he could repel an attack. Loaded arms were always by his side. I myself thought that although these precautions might serve against a solitary murderer like "Juno," yet if harm were meant to him by the majority, a fire-stick thrown into the grass roof would have driven Kyhn out, an easy prey to the first rifle.

Very cool and pleasant indeed was this thatch, but it had its disadvantages. By day there was a continual dropping of dust; at night there was a peculiar programme. We all retired to rest early. The rude table and form, the only articles of furniture excepting portmanteau and Snider, were pushed out of the way. My hammock was slung. I looked to my pistols, and then turned in. On one side Kyhn slept in the room which did duty as his store, lumbered up with "trade," tobacco, pipes, knives, beads, calico, a dangerous keg of powder in the corner, mixed up with provisions for ourselves. On the other side was a room filled with cocoa-nuts, and somewhere coiled up amogst those slept the "Hag," as I called aged and unprepossessing Topsy. The boys lived in the smoke-house outside. As I lay in my hammock previous to putting out the light, I was reminded of poor Ned Farmer's well-known ballad of "Little Jim:"—

> "The cottage was a thatched one,
> The outside old and mean."

But, alas! I could not add with truth—

> "But everything within that house
> Was wondrous neat and clean."

There was no collier's wife here to put things straight. I blew the light out, and in a short time the fun commenced.

The surf surging on the bar is but a lullaby to an old traveller. The growling of the terrier "Mac," who slept outside the door, would not disturb me. Needless to say that he and I were the best of friends. But there were other strange sounds about. I was just dozing when there came a great rustling and quivering in the roof overhead. Then the walls and floor seemed alive, every movable thing in the store rattled. "The spirits are among us," some might have said, and it took me a moment's consideration to discover that rats were the cause. I struck a match suddenly. Up the walls they scampered; they careered over the rude rafters, and dived into holes in the thatch, as much at home above, as on or under *terra firma*. It was there that they had their nests and lay quietly by day, but at night they held high jinks; they came down to forage for meat and drink, or take moonlight promenades on the sands. One got accustomed to the disturbance below, but it was overhead that they annoyed me. After some study I concluded that the younger members of the various families stopped at home above whilst their elders went out on business or pleasure. Then the juveniles had coursing meetings after cockroaches, and handicap steeplechases over the rafters; they fought and made love, and all with such a *frou-frou* of the leaves and grass of the thatch that it awoke me a dozen times in the night with the idea that the roof was coming down. At first I thought they were rather frightened of me, but soon they stood on their hind legs near my hammock, and attempted to jump up, and seemed to "make faces" at me from the walls. Once, one bolder than the rest crept along the cord, or dropped from the roof, and I awoke with the uneasy sensation that I was being examined by a snake. This, if in Australia, would be a fine place for such vermin; but a serpent has one great virtue, he is noiseless.

Rats were one of the curses of Tanna. They were everywhere. There was abundant food for them. At this copra station the cocoa-nuts were ready cracked for them to eat. On the beach or in the bush you came on hundreds of "windfalls," young nuts. In each of them was a small hole; a rat had gnawed this, drunk the milk, and then eaten the kernel. "Fellow Yassuk" is what the natives, said as they gave the hollow shells a kick with their heel. They did not trouble much about the loss by such vermin. Was not the food growing overhead sufficient, except in a bad

hurricane season, for all? Kyhn calculated that the rats ate about ten of his cocoa-nuts a night. He had cats, four of them, but they were not a great deal of use. Fluent old Quiros wrote that when he landed on the island, which he named after the Holy Ghost, he found all the domestic animals there. On Tanna, I was told, cats and dogs "no stop before white man he come." The former they called *pussi*, the latter *colli*, as in Fiji. Dogs were of value; a young pup would be worth a small pig in exchange. Returned labour boys tried to smuggle terriers on board the ships which carried them home. They thought as much of a new dog as of a new gun.

It is one of the laws of human progress that man generally passes through three stages—the mere savage hunter, like the Australian blackfellow; the man of flocks and herds, as the ancient shepherd kings; and then the agriculturist of our own era, who lives by the fruit of the soil. Some eminent writer, whose thought I remember, but whose name I forget, has pointed out that as the hunter is but a mere beast of prey, the herdsman must undergo a refining change of manner by the care which he has to exercise in rearing his flocks. This is a poetic theory, though I do not know that it has exactly worked itself out in practice. However this may be, in the southern islands the native has jumped at once to the most advanced stage of human progress. He could not live by the chase, there is nothing on shore for him to hunt, and he cannot get one square meal a week from the sea. He could not become a herdsman, for he has no flocks to tend nor plains to pasture them on. So perforce he is an agriculturist, cultivating the soil with as much industry as himself and wives are capable of, and in the manner of it often equalling anything I have seen in the world. The time of the planting of the yam is a sacred season here—then man and woman must hold no communion together, the spirits which guard the mysteries of our great mother earth must be approached as reverently as Urim and Thummim. The men believe with Carlyle that work is a sacred thing; so sacred, in fact, that they do not wish to make it common, and abstain from it altogether except on the high occasions of seed-time and harvest.

Having had no wild animals to chase, these islanders became hunters of men. They killed and ate each other, which good old custom is still in vogue. Having had no flocks to tend, the

few domestic animals they now hold are by them highly prized. A pig is the most valued of their possessions, a dog comes next, afterwards the cat. An islander likes pork better than anything in the world except it be human flesh, but he will also occasionally eat *pussi.* and *colli.* Maafu himself, *Roko Tui Lau*, Viceroy of the Windward Islands, and "direct representative of Her Majesty" under the late Governor of Fiji, had, I remember, a cultivated taste for roast dog. But the natives are, in life, kind to the few animals they possess. A woman carries a young pig like a child. Dogs are petted and cats are nursed. When Kyhn bought the first kitten for the value of ten cocoa-nuts there was great jealousy amongst his "hands" as to whom it should belong. *Place aux dames,* so it was put down as the property of the "Hag," who slept with it in her arms every night. Three other kittens had been bought and were owned by three of the "boys," who were as jealous of the merits of the little animals as any mother could be of her babe. Say to "Jack," from Mallicolo, "That fellow *pussi* belong a you no good; fellow *pussi* belong a 'Santo' plenty good;" Santo would be jubilant, and Jack sulk for a day. They fed the kittens all day long, which at night slept on their mats. They were just like children in this respect; but the consequence was the cats were not worth a cent to catch rats, and that there was a nightly saturnalia over my head.

My host's "boys"—three from Mallicolo and one from Santo—were fine fellows, willing and obliging, and doing their work well in this the first of their three years' term of servitude. They had not too much work to do, were well supplied with their native food of yam and taro, besides plentiful rations of rice, which cereal put them in better training for any hard work, such as rowing. Working all day long amongst cocoa-nuts, they need never have gone hungry. They could never be thirsty, for there was a continuous supply of milk from the thousands of nuts they cracked. The boys seldom drank anything else. Water they did not like, and the water here—unqualified—was not good. They had as much tobacco as they could smoke, and altogether their condition was one to be envied by many a European labourer. They were willing and obliging, as were many islanders I had seen in Queensland, Fiji, and New Caledonia; yet on their native heath they would—if the fit had seized

them—have very willingly taken a white man's life. They are so easily governed and influenced by their surroundings. Still, I had as yet seen no reason to alter the opinion formed long since in the colonies, that residence there had a civilising effect on indentured labourers. I claim for my race that we are better than heathen cannibals; that even the majority of the slaveowners of the South were kind and humane, and that association with white men must have some influence for the better on the Kanakas. Certainly, whilst doing their time, it has a very great influence on them. That this influence is not permanent when they return home, is because they cannot resist the public opinion of their families or clans. "Charlie," who was paid off here from the *Caledonia*, had good clothes, and went ashore in them; the next day he appeared in only a *sulu*; the day after he was nude after the manner of Tanna. But when I saw the wretched hut in the missionary village where Charlie lived, I was not surprised at the change. Yet Charlie had learnt this much, to speak English, to be decent and obliging to me, and to recognise my ways and habits. This was so much gained. Here was George, also, who came and sat on the step as I was writing. His face was adorned with black and yellow stripes, his hair was twisted, and he carried a rifle. He, too, came from the missionary village, and these outward and visible signs of savage life remained with the dirty and wretched hovels in spite of twenty-five years of praying and preaching. Yet George, who had been to several of the Queensland plantations, was even more respectful than Charlie, and ready at volunteering useful information. His English was equal, and his intelligence superior, to that of many a midland county Hodge.

The young Norwegian was a kind master to his men, and, I thought, a general favourite with the natives there, although he doubted many of them. Juno, I believe, he dreaded. To have a sevenfold murderer living just above you, and always at your gates, is not pleasant; but Juno, as chief of the nearest village, assumed a sort of suzerainship or protection over the store. He loafed about all day long and begged tobacco. Gottfrey Kyhn was not of the stuff of which Berserks were made, he was far too good-natured. He was a handsome fellow, but there was little of the "Norse god" about him except his appetite and love for all women. We drank *Skaal!* together often, but he did not

prove of the first force over the flowing bowl—square gin in this case. A young man of twenty-five, sailor and first mate of a Norwegian ship, hurt on board in Sydney four years before, laid up in the hospital there for many weeks, drifted to New Caledonia, became mate and recruiter of a labour vessel in the islands, and for the last seven months had been a trader on Tanna. A simple enough story. A well-bred youth, tenderly and religiously nurtured at his mother's knee. I scarcely thought to find a Bible and a Church Service in a copra-maker's house, yet they were there near the trestle on which he slept. Often he talked of the old home in the valley near Christiania, of the merry winter nights with dances at country houses, and the long sleigh-drives homewards. This young Norwegian lacked iniquity in dealing with the natives. I hoped, for his soul's sake, that he would continue like this, and not let the lust of profit enter into his heart and lower the price of cocoa-nuts, whence would come disputes and a bullet through his brain. The accursed spirit of trade changes men's natures so much, and there is a temptation, when savages are trying to do you, to give *them* less than their due. Poor fellow, he was often for hours prostrate with attacks of fever.

The copra-trader's life, it will be seen, is not entirely a happy one. He suffers from disease, he lives in daily danger of death. There should be some inducement besides that of a free and easy existence away from the trammels of civilisation, to tempt any decent young fellow to live alone there, where for weeks he may not see a white face. The trade is a paying one, and a steady man can save money. It is simple enough, too, "no previous knowledge of the business required." For ten cocoa-nuts you give either a stick of tobacco, value here three-farthings, or a clay pipe, value here one halfpenny, or a box of matches, of the same value, or a pipeful of paint, value one-eighth of a penny, or a pipeful of beads, value one halfpenny. A fathom of common calico, worth 5d., will bring 100 nuts. About 7,000 nuts will make a ton of copra, which will cost in tobacco £2 2s., in pipes, matches, beads, or calico, £1 8s.; and in paint only 7s. But comparatively very little paint is bought. Tobacco is the principal trade, and the average cost of the raw nuts may be taken at £2 per ton. The outside cost of labour in preparing copra is £1 5s. a ton, so that the expense of production is £3 5s.

a ton. It is purchased here by the New Hebrides Company at £9 a ton. In Noumea, when I left, copra was worth £13 2s. 6d., and going up in the market, so the Company made a splendid profit, beside what it got in supplying the traders at very outside prices. One boy can make a ton of copra a month, and the only trouble is to obtain sufficient nuts. Sulphur is the only other article of commerce on Tanna.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### MISSIONARIES AND POLITICS.

THE public opinion of the chiefs I met at Port Resolution was very decisive, and as this was the only trading place in Tanna, it was the resort of all the tribes except those who lived very far north. For the French they had only words of hatred and contempt, for the English nothing but a good word. "Tanna belong a English," they said. One, "Tanna belong a big fellow Queen England." I asked if he "sabes" the Queen. He must in the colonies have seen some picture of the Royal family, for he replied: "Me sabe, one big fellow man die; big fellow woman she stop, plenty piccaninny." This fairly described the domestic condition of the Gracious Lady who reigns over England. Some big fights were going on at that time, and the "bushmen" were not coming down to the port, so I sent emissaries to the north, to the east, and to the west, carrying the word that there was to be a big talk there on the next Saturday; that I had come from Australia to see the chiefs of Tanna, and hear what they said for French or for English rule, so that the "big fellow" Queen Victoria of England might know their hearts. Therefore, the fights had better be finished, a *tabu* be made, and the chiefs meet me, and talk in peace. In thus endowing myself with semi-diplomatic powers, I trust I had not been guilty of *lèse-majesté*. In the present state of affairs respecting the New Hebrides, I considered it my duty to obtain an independent expression of opinion from the natives—an opinion which might be contrary to that held by the missionaries or by myself.

The danger was that these chiefs would mock at my self-imposed mission—that they would imagine I was tricking them into signing some document prejudicial to their interests. As the outcome of what I had already heard, which was that, "All man Tanna say all the same," I had prepared a petition to Her Majesty, to be signed by the chiefs if they would.* The

* See Appendix.

natives all knew the value of a written document. The many purchases of land made in this island had been attested by their marks. They always acknowledged and never attempted to dispute these deeds. Not one of them here could read English. When I should stand before them and ask to be their voice to the world, and should say, "Put your marks to this," how would they take it? I had no outward and visible forms of authority with me, like the captain of a man-of-war. I had no pretensions to inward and spiritual grace, like a missionary. They could understand the one; they respected the other as some unknown *tabu;* but what could they make of me? They would not realise the power a journalist represented, greater than that of soldier or preacher. I was neither, ostensibly, officer, missionary, sailor, nor trader. What would these people think? Should they imagine that I was deceiving them, the situation would be awkward. They were not fools; they were bloodthirsty and brutal; but they had a fine sense of their own rights and their own liberties. The man who would attempt to cheat them out of either would make the acquaintance of a few Snider bullets. This was the trouble I had to look forward to. But, as a journalist more or less matters very little, I intended to see the thing through.

The mission at Port Resolution had been abandoned for nearly twelve months. At Kwamera, fourteen miles down the coast, the Rev. William Watt had been stationed since 1869, having also to take charge of the souls on the island of Aniwa and at the Port. On the evening of my fourth day on Tanna, the mission schooner *Dayspring* was seen standing off. Kyhn told me she was bringing Mr. Watt back to his own station. Now, I wished to get all the signatures I could without consulting the missionaries. They might not be with me, and could certainly influence a few against me. Could we get to Kwamera before Mr. Watt, go through his electorate, and the work being done, meet him as he landed? The *Dayspring* was bound to keep well out at night, so we started at dawn in the morning to get through the programme I had laid down. We sailed along the beautiful coast. The shore was fringed with cocoa-nuts from high-water mark upwards. The smoke of many villages was to be seen near the beach, others farther inland, but not up in the mountain valleys, where there was scarcely any population. On Tanna, the line

which divides the "salt-water" from the "bush" tribes is a narrow one. Four or five miles inland the natives are described as bushmen. But as Tanna is only some fifty miles in circumference, it is not possible to get very far away from the sea. One could see that this fertile soil would, with very little exertion, maintain a large population. On the south-west and south-east coasts the inhabitants were reckoned at 100 for every mile of beach. Long jagged reefs ran out far into the sea; there was a deep swell on the shore, on which the waves dashed in a surf as powerful as at Hokitika. The sunbeams striking on the spray formed brilliant rainbows. There was a turquoise sky above, and opal depths below. To lie back in the stern sheets and imbibe the influence of these surroundings was happiness. I thought of dear friends far away, and wished that some were with me to enjoy these summer cruises in the South Seas. The *Dayspring* was seen in the offing beating in on a light wind.

It was four hours from the start when we ran through an opening in the dangerous reef into the beach at Kwamera. There was a crowd of boys and girls ready to welcome us. I imagined that they took me for the missionary when afar off, and I felt flattered accordingly. The first thing was to get introduced to the chiefs, of whom there were three here. The principal one was having his hair done by the court barber. He was lying back luxuriously on the sand, whilst his locks were combed out, and, with fibre, rolled into numberless thin tresses, the ends of which were frizzed out in a manner not entirely unbecoming. He was rather disdainful at first, but through the interpreter, an old "labour boy," I at last made arrangements with him and his people for a "big talk" later on. Then we adjourned to the missionary's boat-shed, and took our breakfasts surrounded by an admiring crowd. Some young girls were decently clothed in cotton dresses, others exposed all the charms which nature had given them. With two or three exceptions, the men were all nude. It was the fashion in both sexes to wear a dozen tortoiseshell hoops in the ears. Old ladies had the national long grass petticoat, and round their necks were slung rough pieces of greenstone, honoured heirlooms, which, like the Maories, they much valued. We were surprised by Messrs. Watt and Laurie, who we thought were still on board the *Dayspring*.

My chances of catching the missionary's people alone were finished! We adjourned to Mr. Watt's house. It was a fine roomy building, very pleasantly situated, with a grass roof, lined inside. A schoolhouse near was also of weatherboard, but the church was the ordinary grass and reed shed. It was the policy of the old Presbyterian Church not to attach any sacred value to a thing made with hands; hence they inculcated amongst the natives respect for the Sabbath as a Divine institution, and considered any place good enough to worship in. Happily for the architectural beauty of Collins Street, all that is different in Melbourne.

Mr. Matheson, of the Presbyterian church of Nova Scotia, settled at Kwamera in 1858. The particular "call" which the "Bluenoses" had in evangelising the New Hebrides I cannot exactly understand. However, they were the founders of the mission here as elsewhere; and until one had personally realised the many hardships, perils of climate, and dangers from savages, I think it must have seemed an attractive "call" from bleak and cold Nova Scotia to these ever-verdant isles of the Pacific. But in less than four years Kwamera was abandoned; and it was not until 1869 that Mr. Watt, who belonged to the Reformed Church of Scotland, re-opened the mission here. He had met, I was told, with as much success as any one. He was respected by the natives around, and had a fair congregation. A few—very few—had learnt our ideas of decency. And both Mr. and Mrs. Watt seemed to be imbued with a true Christian spirit. The young Norwegian trader, my companion, was loud in praise of the missionary. "When I was down with the fever he visited me, and Mrs. Watt made and sent me bread, and any one who says anything against them has to fight me," said this descendant of the Berserks. Judging by the well-used books on his shelves, Mr. Watt was a student; judging by his conversation he was more—a practical man of the world. He did not seem to think that every one except a missionary would be damned, and he had none of the peculiar language—I will not say the "cant," but the shibboleth—used by too many of his class. I have to thank Mrs. Watt for her hospitable reception and good tea, although, as in the case of the little lady at Manipori station—who so insidiously asked me, "Do you drink whisky?"—I recognised that a stranger there was

rather an acquisition, always provided that he did not belong to a "slaver." From the second mate of the *Dayspring*, who was on shore, I learnt of a sad affair at Api, a few hours after we left there. Two more white men killed: why not I as well as another? I little thought, as we passed the *Lavina* at anchor, and waved adieu to my old acquaintance the Government agent, who was leaning smoking over the rails, that in less than a week he would be murdered where we had gone ashore.

After lunch—the natives having been got together—we adjourned to the beach. Mr. Watt said he did not wish to have anything to do with my petition, as it would be travelling out of his province; but he consented to give his assurance of my *bona fides*. We found that the boss chief had just got through being "barbed." He was carefully burying some stray hairs in the sand, so that not one might blow away and fall into the hands of an enemy. He would not leave them there, but would burn them afterwards. It is a superstition not confined to the New Hebrides, but found also in the Banks and Solomon Islands, that if any evil-disposed person takes a piece of the food you eat, or anything belonging to your person—a hair from your head, a toe-nail, etc.—by placing this over a slow fire, you will die in agony as it scorches up. No Tannaman will eat fowl, for fear a feather may fall into an enemy's hands. You cannot get one of them to take half a stick of tobacco, as the other part being burnt in an enemy's pipe would cause his death. Banana skins, or the rinds of any fruit, are always carefully collected, and burnt or buried by those who have eaten what was beneath them. One cannot laugh the natives out of these superstitions. I offered them stumps of cigars, and dared their most powerful wizard to harm me. They admitted their impotency where white men were concerned, but seemed to have a sort of pride that they themselves were liable to this witchcraft; just as some Old World people are proud of having ghosts, banshees, the gout, and other disagreeables, hereditary in their families.

The head men of the surrounding villages were assembled. Some, like Cincinnatus, had been called from husbandry to affairs of state, and coming straight from the yam patches, their hands were soiled with earth. The petition was translated to them, and my address in "beach-comber" English was listened

to with great attention. Mr. Watt confirmed the truth of the translation. There was a talk among themselves, and then, by acclamation, it was resolved that it was desirable that the "big-fellow Queen" should prevent French annexation, and that the chiefs should affix their marks to a letter to that effect. "Frenchman no good," each man said, with a shake of his head. The marks were accordingly set down by the chiefs, not without a certain amount of nervousness at this strange ceremony. When this business was over, they all seemed as if they expected me to summon British legions out of the earth. If the French should annex the New Hebrides, I am not going to visit there again. The natives will look upon the "big-fellow Queen" and myself as deceivers.

I made a farewell address. As I looked round on these naked savages, some standing, others lying on the sands, I was reminded of William Penn, when he got the chiefs of the Delaware and Susquehanna valleys to sign that celebrated treaty which "euchred" them out of their fertile plains. But this paper, which the chiefs of Tanna signed, could only do themselves good, as I was not working on my own account or for any personal benefit. I was "going one better" than William P. In my parting words I tried to impress a little useful knowledge on my hearers. With a sheaf of reeds, I gave them a version of the old tale of the bundle of sticks. I pointed out how foolish it was for the men of Tanna to fight and kill each other when, by uniting, they would be powerful. I appealed to them, for the sake of self-interest and material prosperity, to give up war. I don't know if this view of it had ever struck them before, or if the seed fell on good ground.

We went to say adieu to Mrs. Watt, who was in the shade of the boatshed, talking to the girls and women of the village. Amongst the former there were three damsels who wore kerchiefs on their heads, as well as good cotton dresses, and looked superior to the rest. These were favourites of Mrs. Watt, having been trained from infancy by her. They were Christian, and therefore still vestals. They could only be given to the elect, and there were none such on hand. The heathen young men wished to marry them, but Mr. Watt would not consent. The vestals might cast longing eyes at the heathen braves; but they had to hide their love and wait until three Christian young

natives came along. Truly they were suffering for the faith. The women crowded around Mrs. Watt with affection. My feelings received a momentary shock when I saw a hideous old hag, clad only in a grass petticoat, embrace and caress the lady with fervour. Not only a fashionable woman of the world, but any working girl, would have shrunk from such contact with disgust. Mrs. Watt did not like it, I was sure, but she disengaged herself without any sign of repugnance. And then I understood the true missionary spirit. I beheld there the outcome of the vision which the apostle saw at Joppa, when the gospel of humanity and love to all, preached by Him of Nazareth, was first understood as being held out to all mankind, and not only to the parish of Judea. "Nothing is common or unclean." Love and charity and the example of good lives; these the missionary and his wife could evidence here—of more value, perchance, than prayers and sermons. In time, the seed might bear fruit, but the harvest was long, very long, in coming: at that time there was scarcely a germ! Going down to the boat, I was disgusted at being asked to buy yams, as if I were a common trader, instead of being one self-clothed with an important diplomatic mission! The importuners, however, were few, and I got rid of them by distributing a few sticks of tobacco, a proceeding which I hope did not come under the bribery clause of the Ballot Act.

Thus, at Kwamera, I commenced my election campaign. Everywhere the result was the same; a hatred of the French strongly evidenced, and the marks of the chiefs readily affixed to the petition when it was explained to them. A desire was often expressed that the Queen should send a "big fellow" ship to fight the "*Wee-wees.*"* Strange enough were some of my experiences. *Par exemple*, I wrote one night in a grass hut, where there was just room to sling my hammock. A box on the ground served as a table, the candle flickered in the wind, my Snider and revolver were close to my hand, for I was cautioned always to be prepared for danger. The dark vegetation outside gave out a sickly smell in the moist night air. My companion was sleeping in another hut afar off, and I was alone

* The French are called thus, or *man-a-wee-wee*, by these islanders, obviously from their frequent use of the words, *oui, oui*.

with my thoughts. I imagined I was considered to be *tabu*, as a great chief of Victoria. That night a man, who had a Snider ball shot through his hand, was brought to me to be examined. The wound was one which, in any other country, would have necessitated amputation. Here it was healing up quickly, owing to the pure vegetable diet of the sufferer.

When we departed at morning, the beach was crowded with men and women to see us off. They sat in different groups. I talked to both sexes of their service in Queensland and Fiji. From these I obtained no complaints as regarded the labour traffic. The women especially lamented the time of their three years' "slavery" in the colonies. They mentioned the names of people I knew with whom they had served. They were in far better case then. "Plenty *mano* (dress); plenty *ki-ki* (food)." This was what these females, now dragged down with the cares of maternity, and toiling hard in the yam patches, told me. On every island, and in every village I had been to, I had questioned the natives as to their view of the labour trade. Complaints have been made against individual ships for "stealing" men; but poll the people, and the minority in favour of suppressing the traffic in "indentured labour" would be ridiculously small. One of the largest individual gatherings I attended was at White Sands, some five miles from Port Resolution. Word had been sent overland to the surrounding villages that the "big fellow talking captain" was coming. An early start, and we rowed along the shore, where we could see all the formation of the coral rocks upheaved by the earthquake, with the lower stone strata beneath. At the point stood two lone cocoa-nut trees. They were previously on the hill-top, but in the great convulsion a landslip took place, and they were carried a quarter of a mile without injury. This had always been a great source of wonder to the natives, who imagined that the trees were taken up bodily and borne through the air. "Yasur made him," they said; and they were right, in that the hidden forces of the volcano caused the convulsion. Sulphur Bay is well known to sailors. White men have been long established there, trading for copra and for sulphur, which the natives bring down in bags from the volcano sides. In 1877 an honest trader living there, named William Easterbrook, was murdered by the natives. Lieutenant Caffin, of the *Beagle*,

hanged a man for this, not the real criminal, but an accomplice who was present at the murder, and ready to finish the deed. The actual slayer of Easterbrook was one named Yuhmunga; he was then an indentured labourer in Queensland, at Maryborough; he was a thorough scoundrel, and if any one seeing this should find him out, and kick him, justice will not suffer.

Anent this murder, I will quote Dr. Steel's book on the New Hebrides, as showing the unfair bias against traders which missionary accounts always give. It seems as if they can never be just, when they write of other white men except themselves. Dr. Steel, who, I suppose, got his information from the resident missionaries, says Easterbrook "had sold gunpowder to the natives, and lived with one of their women. Some quarrel had arisen about this woman, and it led, it is believed, to his death in this violent manner." Any one reading this, and especially if with Exeter Hall proclivities, would imagine that Easterbrook rather deserved his death than otherwise—there is the obvious suggestion that he had abducted or seduced a Tanna woman, and hence met his fate. When I read this to Captain Macleod, he briefly said, "It is a —— lie." The dead man's partner was a good woman from Api, bought as his wife after native fashion, and living with him as such, although the union had not been sanctified by the ritual of the Church. She then resided on Sandwich, cultivating, with island labourers, a little property for the benefit of her half-caste children, of whom Captain Macleod had taken charge. I have before pointed out, that traders scarcely ever take unto themselves partners of the daughters of the island where they live, in that way avoiding complications with the natives. Easterbrook, from the testimony of the Tanna men at Sulphur Bay, was murdered without provocation, through a trading dispute over a bunch of cocoa-nuts which Yuhmunga had stolen. The tribes lamented it, and said that if his half-caste son would come and live with them, they would give him a piece of land. I quote this as one of many examples of missionary narratives, in which every white man except themselves is held up to scorn.

# CHAPTER XXIII.

## VOX POPULI.

At White Sand there was a heavy swell on the beach, and into this we backed our boat, after dropping a small anchor and letting out many yards of chain. To get ashore dryshod I jumped on to "Santo's" back as the waves receded. This boy, who came from the island of that name, was not up to my weight. He made a few steps and then fell flat, and the flow of the tide covered us. Santo was jeered a good deal by the crowd ashore for the shaky condition of his knees, and as I laughed, the natives laughed also, and Cocari, the chief, greeted me with outstretched hands.

An intelligent native this, not unlike Juno, P.M., in appearance, but very unlike him in disposition. He had been an indentured labourer, and recognised the value of work in getting money and tobacco and other things not to be picked up in the bush. Whilst Juno loafed around the store at Port Resolution, black-mailing Gottfrey Kyhn for tobacco, Cocari was acting as agent for the trader here, buying cocoa-nuts and bossing the labour boys. He was quite a man of business. Not, let it be understood, that there was any hard work in giving a stick of tobacco for ten nuts, or in swearing at the boys as they made copra. Still, a certain amount of application and steadiness was required in this, and it was pleasing to see a native equal to the occasion. Cocari was paid £3 a month, with allowances of tobacco and *kava*. He had three boys from Pentecost under him, whom we brought down in the *Caledonia* from Port Vila. Their pay was 20 francs a month. These islanders were grave-looking men, with the upper lip shaved, and a general "local preacher" appearance. They did not believe in clothes. On the trip down Captain Proctor gave them shirts, as he did not "like to see naked niggers" on board his ship, but they had got rid of these. There were piles of cocoa-nuts being cracked in the shed, and drying on the *battas* outside. Much more copra was made here than

at Port Resolution, and the Norwegian was having a house erected, intending to live between the two places. He gave Cocari £10 worth of trade for a piece of land, and had drawn up the most comical "Indenture between Gottfrey Kyhn of the first part, and Cocari of the second part," which a lawyer ever saw. I could not be a witness to this, as requested, the consideration having been paid before my arrival, but I could testify that the chief and all the people acknowledged that the ground belonged to the Norwegian trader, due payment having been received. Divested of all legal jargon, the "indenture" was plain enough in its meaning, and should hold good to Gottfrey Kyhn, his heirs and assigns for ever. I myself thought that natives should give any white man coming to reside amongst them enough ground to live on; but these guileless savages are smart enough in making a dollar. They give nothing without payment.

At White Sand I was received by some eighty of the male sex, more than half of whom, however, were non-electors, being fine boys rising from five to fifteen. A great many of the young men were away in Queensland, and we had consequently here only the seniors and the extreme juniors, the forces of conservatism and progress. Some of these boys had their faces painted red, and yellow, and black, which no doubt they considered full, as it was their only, dress. These were favourites of some fond mother or father prepared to meet in due form the "big fellow talking captain." They were smart lads, who eyed me curiously, and shrank laughing behind each other when I looked at them. But they were not rude in anything; indeed, I think they were on their good behaviour, which was certainly infinitely better than that of many white children in Great Britain or the colonies. They were young as yet and adaptable. Transplant them into different surroundings, and they might become good, honest, affectionate servants; tender nurses to children, trustworthy as any white. I had seen such in New Caledonia and the colonies. They were improved whilst in constant association with Europeans. But in their native isles their social condition forced them to become heathen cannibals.

All young things are attractive, even young "niggers." Pot-bellied were many of these boys, and several of them, having bad colds in the head, and not possessing pocket-hand-

kerchiefs, were not enticing about the nose and lips. But there was a freedom about them which you could not help noticing. Perhaps it was the absence of clothes; perhaps the fact that they had not to work. I had often observed this in young savages, especially in the dozen who ran after the buggy containing the Commandant Servan and myself, when driving near Canala five years before. They climbed up the back, hung round our necks, and sat on my knee until we neared the *poste*, when they jumped down. Two Marist Brothers were passing. The Christian boys, all distinguished by little crosses round their necks, cringed low. But the heathen lads, naked as they were born—yet, as it seemed, with a knowledge that the soil was theirs, and with a certain grace and dignity bred of a feeling of equality—held out their hands to the priests with a "*Comment ça va, mon père?*" If anything, they were a trifle patronising in their tone. So these boys at White Sand were not "cheeky" by any means, but they evidently considered themselves quite as good, and I dare say, after the manner of youth, better than I was. But they listened approvingly to my address, and acted as a sort of chorus, after the manner of non-electors. Once there was some particularly spicy little joke amongst themselves—it might have been at my personal appearance—which the elders promptly suppressed with threats. The women and little girls, as having no knowledge of politics and statecraft, looked on at a distance.

There was another sort of chorus in the shape of a bald-headed old man (how I welcomed him!) who broke in every minute with the emphatic interjection, "No good *man-a-wee-wee!*" He had been both in Queensland and New Caledonia, and at the latter place the iron had entered into his soul. There was a second venerable chief, over seventy, I heard, who could not speak English, but who made me an address in which I caught the words "Capitaney Cook." It was translated to me thus:—"Tanna belong a English, Capitaney Cook find him long time back. My father little fellow, he see him. Capitaney Cook no *man-a-wee-wee*, he fellow English." The other elder joined, "*Man-a-wee-wee* no good," and the non-electors grunted approvingly. This was the second time I had heard England's right to superiority in Tanna asserted on account of the discovery of the island by the great navigator. At first I thought the idea might have been imbibed from some trader or missionary,

but there was no mistaking this evidence. There was evidently an authentic tradition of Captain Cook's visit, and of his nationality. This man at White Sand was a heathen speaking no English—speaking, indeed, a different language to the native on the east coast who had before quoted Captain Cook to me. The chiefs affixed their marks to the petition with signs of approval from all. Before we departed I went through another ceremony. Cocari, the chief, who took Paul's advice of having only one wife, had had a son and heir born to him the previous day, who had as yet received no name. I was asked, "Very good you give him piccaninny one name." I christened him *Vaga*, and wrote it on my card, with the date, and a request to all white men to respect my godson. Also I took a ring from my finger, which Cocari was to wear until such time as the little fellow could run about, when it would be secured around his neck as an amulet in the native fashion. I wondered much how he would turn out; whether he would be a missionary man, or follow the cannibal habits of his forefathers, or be a thorough-paced scamp; and under which flag, English or French, he would fight when arrived at man's estate. In years to come, should he go as an indentured labourer to Queensland, would anyone remember my name and be kind to him on that account? Who knows? As we departed to the boat, the crowd followed us. The boys helped to push our craft out; there was a shaking of hands, and a chorus of "*Marms* (Good-bye)." This visit had been a great success. The bald-headed one yelled after me as we pulled off, "*Man-a-wee-wee* no good." He did not want his opinions misunderstood.

Saturday, September 8th, 1883, was a big day at Port Resolution. There was a mass meeting of the chiefs for many miles around, both from the coast and from the bush. The word had been carried, and the fight was over. News travelled quickly in this island, and I found that nearly every man knew my mission, and had heard of the letter to the "big fellow Queen of England." This was generally the principal day for bringing in cocoa-nuts. The women arrived early, carrying great bunches of ten nuts each, ready husked. They sat down on the sand till their lords and masters showed up. Then the young trader, standing at the gate of the cane-plaited fence, counted the bunches as they were handed past him. These people only

reckoned in fives. "*Grerum, Grerum,*" five and five, one bunch; and the payment, a stick of tobacco, a box of matches, or a clay pipe, was handed to the husband or father. A few eggs and some onions were also brought for barter. Sometimes an attempt was made to palm off nine nuts as a full bunch, but "Monkey," the Mallicolo boy who took them in, was smart in detecting any deficiency.

There were no boys here now, but more than fifty stalwart men, each with a Snider, each with a filled cartridge-pouch. Here was "Tom Tanna," one of the few big chiefs on the island, who, they said, could command 200 warriors. He in his day had served in the colonies, and understood English well. Yatek, his opponent in the late fight, although a *tabu* had been declared, was afraid to come down, but sent word that his heart was that of all the men of Tanna in despising the French. I did not, however, think this sufficient to enable me to sign his name to the petition "by procuration." I determined to endeavour to get to Yatek. The professions were represented. Here were the medicine men—disease makers, not healers, who, if you take them a hair of your enemy, will cause him to die in torture: doctors here do not profess to cure, only to kill. Here was Titawaima, the talking man, who "orates" at the public meetings. Here was old Sawara, the rain-maker and wind-maker, who had assumed the power of controlling the elements. He had a reed pipe like that of Pan in his belt, and was altogether satyr-like in appearance. But his playing was not by any means equal to that of a Punch and Judy man. Sawara, if he did not believe in his own powers, had inspired faith in them both amongst friends and enemies. Should any untoward storm injure the yams or cocoa-nuts of another tribe, it was put down to the old man's devilry, and the injured ones went about seeking his blood. Sawara dared hardly stir outside his own camp; and he had to stop at home and get what enjoyment he could by brooding over his reputation. Perhaps, like Slade and other impostors, he chuckled at the folly of mankind; perhaps, like the greatest of impostors, he believed in himself.

I have taken the stump in different parts of the world for different causes. In the States, on behalf of congressmen, senators, and governors; in Great Britain and Europe, for social movements. I have spoken on behalf of labourers and sewing-

machine girls, for the wrongs of actors and the rights of authors, but I never thought I should stump a cannibal island in the Western Pacific, in favour of Her Most Gracious Majesty and the British Government. If my success was undoubted, it was only that the natives heard me for my cause. I was the embodiment of the *vox populi*. When what I had said was translated to those who could not understand, there was talking and debating, but the end was a general acquiescence. Cocari, who, as father of my godson, had come to see me through the day, was my right bower. The "talking man" was the left. One spoke the language of the east, the other of the west coast. Old Tom Tanna, the only man who did not carry a Snider—true sign of his power—sat by my side. Cocari brought the chiefs to sign.

"This big fellow man belong a ———," some place with an unpronounceable name.

"He sabes what I say? He sabes this fellow letter Queen England ask her not let *man-a-wee-wee* come here? Say man Tanna want Englishman, English missionary, English trader; say sooner belong Australia than belong Caledonia?"

This was what I put to the two bowers, and the answer from the crowd around was always, "He sabe good. No want *Wee-weé*. Want Englishman. Want Australia man; very good. He make her mark."

Once only was there any sign of dissent. An old man stood in the gateway. With his rifle held out in one hand, he gesticulated with the other, with a rude dramatic force of action which was very effective. An old scarred veteran this, one who had killed and eaten many in his day. He was making an earnest appeal to his hearers. There was question and reply, and a general confusion of tongues. I asked my self-constituted agents what the matter might be, and heard that this man was suspicious of me. How did they, who could not read it, know what was in this letter? How did they know that I did not belong to the *Wee-wees?* How did they know that by their marks they had not mortgaged the heritage of themselves and their children for ever? On my soul, Casca, as I called him, was right. But if this idea got about, my life would not be worth insuring after sundown!

"Men of Tanna, have I two faces? Do I look like a *Wee-*

*wee?* This fellow letter is for your good. Suppose you no like him go to Queen of England, I fight him small. Suppose you like him go, good."

I showed Tom Tanna that I would "fight," namely, tear up, the petition. And he yelled at Casca, and my two bowers went for him, and there appeared to be a general cry of the Tannese equivalent to "Shut up!" and "Turn him out." The men of Tanna believed in me, and Casca was snuffed out. I got one of Kyhn's boys to run up on a cocoa-nut tree an old Union Jack, which was on the premises. "Tanna belong a English now?" I was asked, as the men looked at the ensign. "No, but it is *tabu man-a-wee-wee* come," I replied; and I hope it will prove a *tabu,* or I had a great deal of trouble for nothing. Then I shouted, "God save the Queen, with a hip, hip, hurrah!" and the savages joined in the cheer as well as they were able.

All this time the young Norwegian had been buying cocoa-nuts. He had got nearly 800 bunches this morning. He did not, as an agent of the New Hebrides Company, approve of my proceedings, but he was kind and hospitable, and could not see his way how to stop me. His fear was that the Company would send another man to trade against him, or that a French man-of-war would make its appearance, and deport him for looking on at my doings. I promised him, "on the square," full compensation for any loss, pecuniary or otherwise, he might suffer. I only called on him for neutrality; should he refuse to acknowledge his obligation, I humorously told him I would shoot him, and stake his body on the sands before us, where the tide ebbed and flowed. What Norwegian power was there in these waters to call me to account? So, if he was not with me, he promised not to be against me. The petition signed, the flag run up, Her Majesty cheered, the only thing to be done was to hand cigars all round. I don't know that they cared as much for these as for tobacco, but those who had been in the colonies knew that a cigar was a high-toned smoke. Then Gottfrey commenced a shooting match at a rock in the harbour, about 400 yards away. Artful young trader! When they had shot off their ammunition, they would have tocome to him for more, and pay dearly for it. The Tannese were good shots at short ranges—200 or 300 yards—but they had no idea of sighting for a distance, so it was easy for the two white men to "take the cake."

My Colt's improved six-shooter aroused their admiration. Until then, in my character of an ambassador, I had stood amongst them like Young Lochinvar, "all unarmed." These men did not keep their guns in very good order. They were lazy, and also lacked proper oils. After a shot or two, there was a difficulty in loading. One new-fangled breechloader, bought in Queensland, got entirely out of gear. I never gave any assistance or advice, as I thought that if the guns were all rendered useless, so much the better. But old Tom Tanna was cunning in these things; he instructed the savage how to take off the breech, and pointed out all the mysteries of the springs and hammer. It was past noon when the tribes took their departure, and I sat down to a well-earned breakfast.

*Ex uno disce omnes.* The only other election meeting I will describe was at Waisesi, a newly-appointed mission station, opened about seven months. This was some six miles to the north of Port Resolution. There was an open bay there, and the best shelter for vessels around Tanna, except at the port, which was rapidly being ruined as a harbour. There was good anchorage too, as the *Nelson* had been in a day or two previously. It was a hard pull against a head wind. As usual, the natives came down to the beach to meet me; some showed the way through the reef in canoes, others sat on the sands expectant. I noticed a comparative absence of firearms. There was a pretty large population about. Some of the chiefs I had met at the port; but as a White Sand boy had shot a Waisesi boy in the bush the other day, *pour s'amuser*, there was now war between the tribes, and the road was stopped. That was how the fights commenced. One, or generally two, lay in wait for a man of another tribe; they fired both together. If cannibals, they ate the body. It appeared to be always known who the murderers were, and their friends had to back them up in the subsequent quarrel. Whenever you hear two simultaneous rifle shots, it is a sign that some one is killed. Twice in Port Resolution I heard this, and jumped up from my writing to see the trouble. Once there was no sign, the deed was hid in the jungle. The other time I saw natives on the shore, a quarter of a mile distant, carrying off a body to feast upon. Other natives, from the village above, who came hurrying down, all

armed, only said, "He man a bush kill other fellow." It was a customary thing for one "bushman," having a grudge against another, to stalk him to the store, and as the unfortunate returned along the beach with his tobacco, he was popped off. Life was held cheaper in Tanna than anywhere I know of in the world; that is, other people's lives.

The Rev. Mr. Gray met me on the shore. I should certainly want his assistance in getting the chiefs together, as we had to be back that night. I asked the missionary to be kind enough to send for the most important chiefs round about, and he was very obliging in acceding to my wishes, although, on my showing him the petition, he was dubious as to whether they would sign. "I really do not know what they think about annexation, or what their feelings are with regard to the French," said he; "since I have been here I have not troubled about politics." The mission-house was healthily situated at the top of the bluff, 200 feet above the beach, and the pull up to it was as stiff as one could have wished. The soil here was a loose black volcanic dust, and although cocoa-nuts were plentiful on the shore line, vegetation did not thrive as in Sandwich. Mr. Gray's mansion was of weatherboard, with an iron roof, but lined inside. He had settled down wonderfully in the short time he had been there, but then both he and Mrs. Gray were from South Australia, and were, like true colonials, adaptable to circumstances. Mr. Gray was sent out by the Presbyterian Church of South Australia. He was a man of education, and had made some useful studies in medicine. I fancied that some of the newer men in this mission field were of a superior stamp to the fathers who, a quarter of a century ago, sometimes fought the good fight, and sometimes ran away. It was objected by many critics that several of the early fathers were not men of education and refinement; that, like the Apostles, they had been handicraftsmen, and that, the days of miraculous inspiration being long since passed, their want of early education was against them. For a missionary intending to sacrifice his life or save souls in cannibal islands, I don't think this criticism was exactly fair. Would these natives understand the courtly grace of Stanley or Noel or Capel, or the elegant periods of Beecher and Chapin? They wanted live earnest men there; not bookworms, or Mayfair curates.

Still, all other things being equal, I like to see a man well read, whatever calling he may follow; so I was pleased at the collection of books—and books which had been used—on Mr. Gray's shelves.

South Australia once sent a mission to Japan, which burst up without converting a soul. I don't think this mission will fail. Mr. Gray had no "shibboleth;" he made no protestations; he was not a fanatic, but struck me as a level-headed, sensible man, and, as aforesaid, being a colonist, he was adaptable. He admitted he had never heard any of the natives make any complaints against labour vessels—indeed, that, in answer to inquiries, they had said there was no such thing now as "stealing"—taking men or women without the chiefs' knowledge and consent—in Tanna. But, as he said, he was yet a new chum there, having had to finish his own house and learn the use of tools. And a very creditable job he had made of it. Astonishing also the difference a lady and a baby will make in a place. Mr. Gray had two teachers from Aniwa, their language being akin to that on the east coast of Tanna. He had a congregation, and had started a school; but, of course, his first care was to acquire the language. When the chiefs were gathered together in the back verandah I went out and addressed them. There were a dozen present, and I found that, thanks to the labour traffic, they could nearly all understand English. I made my stump speech, feeling that Mrs. Gray was quite right when she suggested I ought to have a chairman. I read the petition over to them, and Mr. Gray having been appealed to as to the genuineness of the writing there was a unanimous voice, "No want *man-a-wee-wee*, want Englishman." The missionary was astonished; he questioned them, but with the same result. Three old chiefs affixed their marks, and on my asking if there were any others, the reply was, "No, he put him for all man, he talk to big fellow Queen for all man." These chiefs were said to control 200 men each, and, with the exception of Tom Tanna, were the most powerful I had met with, ruling as they did over many villages.

Mr. Gray showed me all over his establishment with a little pride in his workmanship; then I wished the young couple every happiness, and took the breakneck path to the beach. The missionary and one of the chiefs accompanied me. The

native was kind in giving his assistance and friendly arms, and said he liked his stay in Queensland. The labour trade had not demoralised him. But I fancied the Tannese here seemed to be of a far better stamp than those around Port Resolution, the scene of so many murders *malgré* the twenty-five years' established mission. It was a four-and-a-half hours' pull back to the trader's house, the boys were tired, and on arriving I got my host to give them a "nobbler" of rum each. The result to their unaccustomed heads was a forgetfulness of aches and pains, a lightness of spirit, and immediate sleep. I also reposed peacefully in my hammock, glad that from every quarter the voice of the people of Tanna had been unanimous. In American parlance, they "went solid" for Queen Victoria and English rule.

Have the people of Tanna, bloodthirsty savages though they may be, a right to be heard by the English nation on the question of their nationality? Has a savage any rights which a civilised man is bound to respect? This is a problem for statesmen, not for a humble journalist, to decide.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### A PAST MURDERER.

DURING the many days I spent at Tanna I was a good deal alone with the natives. Kyhn was often absent in his boat looking after cocoa-nuts or copra up and down the coast. When not electioneering I remained in the house writing, and the savages came and looked at me curiously. Juno was always around, and early constituted himself my *cicerone*. A few days after my arrival, I went out on to the beach in the cool of the evening. Cool was a comparative term, as it was still very hot. Juno was cleaning his Snider under a tree. This was about all the work he got through in a day. Seeing me walking along the sands, Juno said: "Me come?" "Yes, if you like," I replied. He picked up his rifle. "Me get Snider belong a you?" for the trader never goes from his door unarmed. "No." Juno strode silently after me, wondering at this. I felt very certain that if he ever should entertain evil thoughts against me, he would let "I dare not wait upon I would." I looked on Juno with interest. Was this dangerous scoundrel the joint production of twenty-five years of missionary enterprise here and of his own experiences of civilisation at the Torres Straits pearl fishery and in Sydney? I fancy it was innate "cussedness" after all. But as it was not every day I met a seven-fold murderer, he was worth studying. Not altogether a bad-looking scoundrel, although thin, slight, and weak. Indifferently strong though I was, I could have crushed the life out of him if I had got a grip. This the man to make uneasy the life of the Norwegian! "He will kill me yet, after you go away," said Kyhn. Would it not be well if I took Juno to some quiet spot in the jungle, and, constituting myself judge, jury, and executioner, after the fashion of lynch law, made him acquainted with the contents of the derringer which he wotted not that I carried? Six years before, when I was dispenser at Pentridge hospital, I had an average of thirty prisoners under my daily and nightly charge. Half of

them were generally "lifers"—people convicted of murder and the foulest of crimes; human beasts, unfit for earth or heaven. When compounding their medicines, which often contained deadly poisons, I sometimes thought, "Just one turn of the wrist, as I measure out this dose, and the world will be well rid of a wretch." If I had done this in one case, four lives would have been saved! If I neglected to "put away" Juno on this opportunity, and harm came to the young Norwegian, I should feel vexed.

Along the beach, under the shadow of spreading trees whose roots at high water were bathed by the tide, till at the western point of the bay we mounted the bluff, and were soon in the mission grounds. There were three buildings. The largest, of course, was the pastor's residence—or rather had been, for Mr. Neilson had "abandoned the field," and Mr. Watt, from Kwamera, could only pay occasional visits to Port Resolution. This was a comfortable house, with lime concrete walls, and thatched roof. I was not impertinent enough to look in through the windows. There was another cemented building. "Is this the church?" I asked. "No; this fellow," said Juno, pointing to the smallest grass structure I had seen. There were two open doorways, but no doors. The floor was strewn with fine coral. One old chair and two stools made up the furniture. On the walls there was a painted alphabet and some written numerals, as copies. There was a native teacher there, and he was reputed to have half-a-dozen scholars. And this was all which remained of the late missionary's fourteen years' labour on the spot. The surroundings, however, were well looked after. There was a good cleared compound and garden patch. Juno motioned his hand towards the highest point. "Good fellow look out stop there," said he. We crossed the bluff till we stood over the sea on the other side of the promontory. Tree and shrub clothed it to the shore beneath. Opposite, the waves dashed over volcanic rocks; below, the water was clear and limpid, reflecting a hundred shades from the coral reefs beneath. Cocoa-nut palms waved above our heads. Aniwa was in the distance. Aneitium loomed up dimly on the horizon. A soft breeze wooed our cheeks. It was a peaceful and glorious view. There was a seat, which I took the liberty of occupying for a time, as I thought of the poet's lines in "Enoch Arden." The murderer

threw himself on the ground, and gazed pensively seaward. He, too, was affected by the influence of the scene. A long time we both gazed in silence. "What name you think him, Juno?" I asked. "Good fellow look out," was the reply. I wondered what he felt. Was it of the past or the future he was thinking? or was it only a refined enjoyment in the present beauty before us? I began to think that the murderer was a man of taste.

We went to the missionary village, which was close at hand. A broken-down corral of reeds failed to keep out vagrant pigs. There were here exactly the same low huts, and roofs without walls, there was the same foulness, the same squalor, the same naked men, as on the heathen island of Ambrym. I tried to find the Christians. One man, with a low comedy countenance, honest-looking, but not extra intelligent, was brought to me. He was a church-goer, if not a member. His father took him when quite "small piccaninny." His opinion was, "Missionary very good man," and that seemed to be his only article of faith. He greeted Juno, however, very amicably; public opinion did not seem to be against the murderer. Outside the village there was, of course, the "kava house;" it was merely an open shed, where, at sundown, the men of the tribe met to drink the decoction from the plant which botanists call *piper methisticum*—the one delight of all natives of Eastern and Western Polynesia. I had drunk it in Hawaii and Fiji, but not prepared as it was here, where the root was chewed by boys, who expectorated into a wooden bowl, water afterwards being added to the required strength. When the root is beaten on stones into a pulp and powder, by lithe-limbed and long-haired Samoan or Tonga girls, who chant mystic lays till the drink is prepared, it is a different thing. One can really like *kava* or *angona* under these conditions, although in taste it always seemed to me a cross between soapsuds and magnesia. But a small bowl of kava, when one is heated and tired, has a wonderfully soothing effect on the nerves, acting something like *absinthe*. Many Fijian planters took it after coming in from a day's toil. Kava drinking was always strictly honoured in the observance in these isles. This flowing bowl calms and does not excite. It is at kava-time the elders talk over business; it is in the open place in front that public meetings are held, that pigs are killed, and women dance and sing

—both hideously—under the shade of the great banyan tree always adjacent to a kava-house.

I accepted Juno's escort to many villages inland. The bush tracks were very narrow, up and down, high reeds towering overhead. Sometimes we were almost crawling through the jungle. Each village was the same—a dozen houses, an open space, the kava-shed and banyan tree. Rank vegetation was all around. Only occasionally could one obtain a breath of pure air from the distant ocean. That was an article these islanders did not care about. By his hut one might see the grave of some chief not dead long enough for the traces to be obliterated. A Chinese habit this, of burying the dead alongside the homes of the living. The population in these villages might vary from twenty to forty. Farther inland the villages, if not so numerous, were more populous. But at some distance Juno would go no farther. This was the road to the home of his last victim, and he made a considerable detour to avoid it. I could not help thinking of Dick Swiveller.

Everywhere one saw the same haggard women, bearing the burden of maternity at home, or returning from toil in the yam-patch, or husking cocoa-nuts to be bartered at the store for tobacco. Polygamy was the rule. The number of single young men away as labourers enabled the elders of influence at home to acquire a plurality of wives. Juno had four in his harem; fearful hags all of them, but useful at yam-planting. I wondered, as I looked, which of them was the price of blood. Woman had to work and weep in Tanna; no wonder she liked to escape to the easy life in Queensland. But, comparatively, were they in worse case than the peasant women one sees toiling in the fields of France or Germany? Those pass an existence to which it is not surprising that many a young girl—being tempted—prefers a life of shame in the cities. I looked at some of these hags, and remembered the hideous old French-woman who assaulted me in a country road, on the march to Orleans, some time in the fall of 1870. In the early dawn I unthinkingly had taken an apple or a pear from an overhanging tree, just as one would in the States, where you pluck an apple as one does a blackberry in England. An old *paysanne* followed me, and abused me as a German thief. I could not understand the trouble at first. Then she, encouraged by my mildness, picked up a stick, and would have soundly

thrashed me if I hadn't run away. She made good time in chase, however, till we overtook some soldiers who knew me, and explained her dialect. A franc brought down on my head all the blessings of "Our Lady." Now this old woman, in comparison with a Parisian dame, was infinitely more hideous than any of Juno's wives.

On my word, I was getting to feel rather an interest in this savage in spite of the seven murders at his door. One reason might be that he was intelligent, and as I grow older I am impatient of fools. I had an idea Juno looked up to and respected me as a new variety of civilised man in these islands. Kyhn said he was "cheeky;" but then one could not expect a smart savage to see anything particularly noble in exchanging sticks of tobacco for cocoa-nuts, and the fault of all traders is that they are too familiar with the natives. One day the news came that Juno had been stung by a fish. We mounted the hill to his village, where we found Juno crouching over a fire, moaning dismally, and holding one hand tightly by the wrist. These people cannot stand pain. They possess none of the wild virtues of the American Indian. His hand was swollen; on the ball of the thumb a small puncture was visible, from the fin of the fish. I applied nitrate of silver, I gave him Eno's fruit salt in plenty, I bathed the wound with "Pain Killer," and also dosed him with it. Then I applied a hot poultice of broken biscuits, at which he squirmed. More Eno, more Pain Killer, and four Lightning pills, "to be taken at bed-time." I only wanted some of Frank Weston's Wizard Oil to cure Juno at once. I thought of the designs on the life of the "Snark," and had the supreme consolation that if this treatment did not cure Juno it would perhaps kill him. They have not much sympathy for each other, these savages: the hags of the harem looked on stupidly, the wind-maker surveyed my operations curiously, and the Second Murderer grinned when Juno shrank from the caustic. This youth was the other's shadow—they were always together. He had been seen hiding in the trees near the store at night with the presumed idea of taking a pot-shot at the trader. The pair of them would put away Banquo "and Fleance too" in improved style on reduced terms. The Second Murderer was not yet known to have killed his man in cold blood, but he was an entered apprentice, being prepared by the P.M. The rightful

heir, to whom Juno was Protector, stared with all his eyes at the course of treatment his uncle was experiencing. He was a little, rickety boy, afflicted with the dance of St. Vitus. I gave him a small dose of Eno in a cocoa-nut shell; he howled dismally at first, but, as it tickled his throat, drank it greedily.

The murderer, I believe, was really thankful; he said so, at least. I confess I was rather astonished when he turned up nearly cured in the morning. I do not, however, recommend the above treatment as being suitable for all cases of poisoning by sting of fish or bite of snake. This fish which hurt Juno is a most peculiar one. Short and round, with parrot beak and fins like wings, it is covered with green slime and horrible dark eruptions, which make it look like a stone in the water. The spines which run down the back are poisonous. Originally its colour would be a reddish-pink. Could Juno have any feelings of gratitude? That morning he said to me, "You like him this?" pulling a little pearl-shell charm from his neck, which I kept as a "curio."

Was Juno worse than many other heathen who had been held up to praise by missionary legend? He acted but according to his lights; killing was his line of business! I asked him why he slew a woman some time back. He maintained that he was quite right. She had been seen to pick up a piece of banana skin thrown away by a man of his tribe, who afterwards sickened. The conclusion was that she had taken the refuse to a disease-maker. So Juno shot her. He narrated it in a most matter-of-fact way—how he had walked in the bush round a yam-patch where his victim was working, how once he had sighted his game, but a little child being in line on the other side, he was afraid the ball might strike her, so he shifted his position. "Very good, she no make him fellow *maté* any more." I thought of Thakambau, who died in the odour of sanctity, who had been an honoured guest at Government-houses in Sydney and Levuka, after having killed his hundreds in hot and cold blood, and eaten his scores. Much bigger sinners than Juno have repented, and, according to the Churches, have been whitewashed sufficiently to secure admission to the kingdom of Heaven. I half resolved to try my hand at a little missionary work on this Past Murderer.

The first Sunday after my landing I went to church. There was service twice a day—in the morning at eight, in the afternoon at two o'clock. Wending my way thither in the bush, near the native village, I caught a convert mooning about, rifle in hand. He pretended not to have heard the bell toll, but I said, "Get thee behind, and follow me." The full congregation consisted—first, of the native teacher, who was from Aneitium; then there was Charlie, who, the fight being over, had attired himself in a singlet and *sulu* once more. He was in the pride of place behind an old packing-case, which might be taken to represent a reading-desk. Little Narua was by his side on a chair. A nice little boy this of about eleven. I took him to be the prize pupil. He was decently dressed in a jersey on this occasion, but on off days he was to be seen on the beach nude, after the manner of Tanna, and carrying a musket. A chair in front had been placed ready for my use. On one side there was a very old man and my recruit, four males all told. There were on the other side three little girls; one bright and intelligent-looking, whom I took to be Narua's sister; one young, and four old women. Such hags! Seated on the ground, they tucked up their grass petticoats as cushions. Their long thin limbs and ugly feet sprawling over the broken coral had an ape-like appearance, and their wizened faces and withered dugs did not dispel the illusion. Thirteen souls in all, when there must have been at least twenty in the missionary village, a stone's throw distant, and 200 within half an hour's walk! I made a calculation that the eleven, excluding myself and the teacher, must have cost about £500 each to bring to their present stage. They were dear at the price.

The teacher was a meek man, not strong enough for the place I imagined. All these Aneitium natives I have met are the same, quiet and docile, perchance learned in the letter of the law in their own language—akin to that of this side of Tanna—but otherwise appearing fools of the first quality. They cannot speak English so well, nor are they half so smart or intelligent, as a returned "labour boy." This "catechist" opened with a sort of an address or prayer. Then one of the sisters read from a printed pamphlet what I presumed was a chapter from the Testament, although there was a running chorus, or response, as in the Litany of the Church of England. A hymn was then

sung to the tune of "Far, far away," of which I presume it was a translation. Then a short prayer—it was a prayer this time, as the people bowed their heads, though they neither knelt nor stood—and "finish." The behaviour throughout was good. Charlie, who appeared to act as a sort of deacon, was not in his manner any the worse for his trip in a labour vessel. The old man was attentive, as if he were vainly trying to fathom the mystery. My recruit was uneasy. Little Narua, to whom I had taken a fancy, was the best of boys, but by his glances at me every now and then, I could see he was "playing to" the stranger. I am afraid he would turn out a little prig, after all. His sister, laughing at the other girl, caught my eye, and immediately put on a most solemn face. The old women were the most enthusiastic, although when a dog walked and a pigeon flew in, the whole congregation was at once animated with what appeared to be joy at a welcome break in the monotony of the service. They were but children, these people, and we know how hard it often is to avoid yawning in church.

The service chiefly commended itself to me by its brevity. When we were outside the shed I asked to be shown the grave of Mrs. Paton, wife of the first missionary at Port Resolution. I was told that it was far down on the beach, where the first mission station was planted, but the buildings were all burnt after Mr. Paton fled in 1862. The natives then asked me to go and see a sick woman in their village. She was crooning over the fire in one of the wretched huts, and was in bad case. I suggested warm bandages round the loins, when her husband said, "How we make him? We no get all fellow same as town." Then I gave them a lecture on their folly in spending their money on Sniders and cartridges, instead of in flannel and calico, and other useful things for themselves and their wives. I preached them a sermon on this Sabbath afternoon, taking as text the five fingers of my hand. These, I said, represented five villages. "One fellow so," and I pushed the native with my dexter; "all fellows so," and I gave him a smart blow with my fist. If the men of Tanna would fight amongst themselves they would always be weak as one finger, and have no money to buy all the comforts which white men enjoyed. I asked Narua to come down to the house, and I would give him medicine; but kava time was at hand, and he

had to go to his task of mastication and expectoration. He was the missionary's model boy; but this disgusting native custom still claimed him. George, however, came with me, and I gave him a dose of chlorodyne for the sick woman. It was something to the good that they believed in the white man's medicine in this village. In another they might have put the illness down to the malicious act of some enemy with the aid of a "disease-maker;" there would have been much talk, and Juno, perhaps, would have been called in to square matters with his rifle.

The trader took me to the grave of the first white lady on Tanna. I was interested in this, as I had read in Dr. Steel's work the following touching testimony to Mrs. Paton—"She did not, like Williams and Harris, on Erromango, lose her life by the hand of violence, yet from her youth, her devoted spirit, her short career, and her sudden and unexpected death, the grave of Mary Ann Robson Paton, as it rises up to view near the seashore, and under the shade of the palm-trees of Tanna, will in future times be an object of interest and a source of influence, second only to the graves of the female martyrs of our native land; who 'loved not their lives unto the death.' In other days, the sable daughters of Tanna, when enlightened by the Gospel, will lead their children to the grave of her who left home and kindred, and traversed the mighty ocean, and sat down among these savage cannibals for their sakes, that she might speak to them of Jesus, and teach them the way of salvation." This is very nicely expressed, and naturally inspired me with interest, and a desire to visit this future shrine of female Tanna. Shortly before I had passed half an hour in God's Acre at New Plymouth in New Zealand. There are few historical mementoes in Australia, where, happily, life for the early settlers was comparatively safe. But the inspection of the Taranaki barracks and stockades, with the knowledge of their necessity, and that on this spot twenty years ago white men were fighting for their existence with the ruthless Maori, makes the churchyard hallowed ground to every one who can appreciate brave deeds. In England, by a large party, the Maori is held up as one who has been wronged of his lands, a gallant child of nature endowed with fine poetic sentiments, altogether a higher order of being to the whites who have supplanted him.

In Australia we have solved our native difficulty by never allowing that the blacks have any rights in the soil at all. And so, with our own beam excised, we have had a clear view of our neighbour's mote. In Taranaki and Gisborne, where there have been native murders, massacres, and wars, the people naturally take a different view of the Maori, in which I rather agree with them. But in God's Acre in New Plymouth I thrilled with indignation at seeing the neglected state of the graves of the soldiers and sailors who died in defence of the infant settlement. The wooden head-crosses broken down, the names obliterated—to the disgrace of the living, not a sign of respect for the brave and forgotten dead.

It might be pleaded that in a young, prosperous, and flourishing community, where life is busy and brisk, the people have not yet had time to cultivate the softer and more refining sentiments and virtues. But I certainly did not expect to see the same neglect at the grave of a missionary's wife, whose death had been made the theme of book and poem. All along the shore was thickly clothed with vegetation, there was nothing rising "up to view" but cocoa-nut trees. Kyhn struck into a hog path, and we forced our way through the bush to a spot which was once cleared. Here there was a rude well, sign of the late missionary dwelling; but this was not what we had come out to see. We retraced our steps, and a native led us along a trail; we broke the bushes for some yards, and there, in the midst of the jungle, covered with matted vegetation, with rank weeds and decaying shrubs which we had to cut away before we could see it, was the grave of the white lady. No stone marked the site, but a strong circular coral wall, firmly cemented, was built around. Stumbling on this in the jungle I should have taken it for the last dim trace of some forgotten tribe long since passed away. There was nought to show that this was the resting-place of the lady, but our native guide was firm on that point, and showed the smaller grave of the infant, who followed the mother, by its side. "Missionary always make him so," and he showed us one other coral wall covered with fragrant flowers. I had to hack these away with my knife to read the headstone which some loving hand had erected here. Surely this must be Mrs. Paton's? But, no! It was "sacred to the memory of" the Rev. Samuel Johnston, one of the early

Nova Scotian pioneers of this mission, who died in the first year of his residence here. I had to scrape away the mould from the stone to read the name and the text, "The night cometh, when no man can work." This was the only sign we could find, save a wooden headboard under a mound of leaves which was once planted over the grave of an unfortunate trader named Underwood, who met his death through an explosion of gunpowder in his store. I felt more indignant at the neglect of God's Acre here than I did at Taranaki. Respect for the homes of the departed may not be held as necessary to our own salvation, but at least it would have a moral effect upon the heathen. As "an object of interest and a source of influence" the grave of Mrs. Paton will soon be again covered and forgotten, unless Kyhn keeps up the clearing, which we made—a tribute from sinners.

One night we had a diversion in the shape of a "wake." A chief in a neighbouring village had died, and all day long there had been a slaughter of pigs. Each clan brought one, and these were exchanged over the body of the departed. His own family had killed one pig extra, which, having been roasted or burnt over the fire, and cut up into small pieces, was distributed amongst the mourners. There was a dense smoke from the row of fires all around the huts. The women were gathered about the grave, the four wives of the deceased had their faces all blackened, which outward sign of woe they would have to wear for six months, and during that time they would remain "sealed" unto the deceased, and no man might look at them. There was a moaning and lamentation from all the women, varied occasionally by a shrill cry, the death keen—altogether reminding me very forcibly of an Irish wake. The body was done up elegantly, wrapped in mats, and deposited in a rude coffin in a grave some five feet deep. These clothes were the first the deceased had ever worn. His ordinary costume of paint had been much added to for this occasion, the face being all over red and yellow and black, the hair nicely dressed, and adorned with feathers. The women shed real tears, but whether from feeling or custom I could not say. The wailing ceased at intervals, and the "orator of the day" gave out what I supposed was a panegyric on the virtues of the deceased. The men appeared to have been drinking *kava*, and were rather stupid, but there was a contro-

versy amongst them as to who had killed the late chief, what enemy had stolen some refuse of his food, and changed it into *nahuk*. Woe to any one on whom suspicion might fall! What with the heat, and the smoke, and the noise, I thought the principal performer at this ceremony had the best time of it. As regards this people's idea of a future life, I could obtain little information. They believed, however, in ghosts, and that the spirit of a slain man might haunt his murderer.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE VOLCANO OF YASUR.

THE New Hebrides are nothing if not volcanic. The action of subterranean fires is plainly visible in all of the islands following in a line from Tanna, nearly always in a state of active eruption, through Lopevi, which merely smoulders, to Ambrym, by far the largest and most important, although neither explosions nor eruptions take place there, as at Tanna. But who can say when it will burst out? When it does its greater volume will cause fearful destruction. Then, as at Aurora in 1871, the tongues of flame may be but a prelude to an earthquake, and the waves may engulf Ambrym. One may follow this action of subterranean fires through the volcano of Ureparapara, the hot springs of Vanua Lavu, and the active volcano of Tinakula, in the Banks Group, westwards to the great burning mountain on Bougainville Island, in the Solomons. Southwards there appears to me little doubt that this line was connected with the volcanoes of New Zealand, as northwards it may be with those in the isles of Japan, thus forming one great track of volcanic action throughout both hemispheres.

When Captain Cook discovered Tanna in 1774, the volcano of Yasur, as it is called by the natives, was in active eruption. He reports it as giving out a great light, and throwing up large stones at regular intervals of five or six minutes. The noise could be heard at a distance of forty miles. From the time of the great navigator to the present day, Yasur has not ceased its work, although its action is much more violent at certain seasons —notably, it is said, during the period of heavy rains, when, streaming into the crater, the water is turned into steam, giving an excess of explosive power. In 1878 the volcano caused the great earthquake around Port Resolution. Minor shocks have often been felt, and one calm, still night, lying awake in my hammock, the house suddenly shook, I was swung violently from side to side, the rats in affright dropped from the roof, and I had,

for a minute, that sickly sensation which nothing but an earthquake, except, it may be, *mal de mer*, can give. It awoke my comrade, the trader, although it lasted but for a few seconds. Some people say that the volcano at Tanna acts as an outlet and safety valve for subterranean action. I think it was Mr. Edgar Layard, C.M.G., who told me that when Yasur was once inactive for a comparatively long period, he noticed that earthquake shocks occurred in New Caledonia, and that the effects were slightly felt in the colonies. This being so, we should pray that Yasur may long go on with its explosions and eruptions, as, if it were stopped up, Melbourne or Sydney might be shaken to the ground.

Sailing up and down the coast of Tanna, I have seen Yasur under various aspects. By day, sometimes with hardly a film curling out of the crater now in action; at others, a pillar of smoke reaching to the clouds; sometimes covered by a heavy pall, with thick showers of dust blown many miles to leeward. Sometimes for hours one would hear no noise, then heavy explosion after explosion, with fiery stones or lumps of lava thrown high into the air. From observation I imagine that the explosions were most violent at high tide. I formed a theory that the sea-water finds its way through numberless crevices, or through the caves, which one sees along the shore, into the crater, and that the explosions are the result of steam. The volcano may be said to extend to the sea; on the beach for miles there are hot springs, and steam and smoke extend thence in a line to the crater, percolating through ground, barren and blasted, and covered with a film of sulphur, which to leeward is found in large deposits. Once, however, luckier than "Our Boys" at Naples, I saw a *bonâ fide* eruption. Returning late one night by boat to Port Resolution, when off White Sand, Yasur commenced firing up, and masses of lava, thrown over the edge of the crater, streamed down the mountain's side for a considerable distance. It was a beautiful sight: if close at hand, it might have been grand and awe-inspiring. My principal reflection was how very inconvenient it must have been to have had one's yam patches in that direction. In time volcanic deposits become very rich and fertile, the yams of Tanna being the largest in the Pacific; but Yasur is a present and actual evil and curse to many. Often the hot dust ruins the yam crops for miles around. These may have

been planted and tended with the greatest of care; a change of wind, or a particularly high wind may come, and the tender vines will be shrivelled up, the work of months will be destroyed, and there will be no provisions except cocoa-nuts for the next year. Then is the time for a labour vessel to recruit. Then is the time that old Sarawa, the wind-maker, muttering his incantations over the fire which he has lighted beneath his fetish—a bag of stones—had best not stir abroad, or his life will be in jeopardy by those who think they owe the ill-wind to his necromancy.

The natives of Tanna are pure Pantheists. They see more than sermons in stones, and books in running brooks. To them there is evil in all the forces of Nature. Demon spirits dwell in and guard every material thing. Yasur is the most powerful. No wonder these ignorant savages have a dread of the volcano, and the devil which they imagine dwells therein. The surprise to me is that many of them live so near it. Yasur certainly brings nothing but evil to them, although, at one time, a certain amount of trade was done in sulphur, which was brought down in bags and baskets. The price they received for this was at the rate of about 20 francs a ton. But after the earthquake, the comparatively good road which led up the volcano was destroyed, the sulphur was harder to get and to bring to the port, the deposits also being more scattered; so no trade has been done in this for some time. Mr. John Morgan, the energetic *directeur* of the New Hebrides Company at Noumea, had a project to form a tramway from the volcano to the beach, and export largely; but I do not think it would pay. Besides, the natives interested would not sell their land to the French. Of course, if annexed to New Caledonia, Messrs. Higginson and Morgan would no doubt easily obtain a "concession" from the government to work the sulphur around Yasur, quite irrespective of any nation's rights or prejudices; but I hope this will never occur. Yasur, then, I look upon as nothing but an unmitigated evil to the natives. They have not, on Tanna, visitors sufficient to make it pay as a show place, *à la* Vesuvius. This may be the case in a few decades, when the descendants of the present warlike Tannese will be a race of guides, cheats, and liars, who will peddle to the personally conducted tourists of the period all the bones they can scrape together, as those of white men consumed inwardly by their cannibal ancestors.

But at present I found it a hard task to get a guide to the volcano's summit. A fight was still going on. Yathek had not yet been to see me. Tom Tanna, his great enemy, had, so he said, buried the hatchet; but the former chief would not, and therefore, I presume, dared not, come to "salt-water." There were hostile villages he would not pass. So, on the other hand, the "salt-water" men around Port Resolution did not like going into the bush. They pleaded the fight, or that they were busy in their yam patches. But many, in reality, did not know the way. One of my boat's crew, who came from Sulphur Bay, professed to know the route to Yasur, and, with the prospect of extra tobacco before him, volunteered to lead us. We started, after an early breakfast, on what, unfortunately, turned out to be one of the hottest days of the season. The trader, Gottfrey, told me we should be sure to pick up men from the villages we passed through, who would act as additional guides and escort. Young cocoa-nuts, too, would furnish us with drink, so there was no need to take anything more than one square bottle. Sniders, of course, we carried, not that I believed they were wanted, but, in the present state of party feeling in the bush, Harry would not trust himself with us unless we and he were armed. This native was a loathsome-looking object, covered with hideous sores, worse by far than anything seen in European hospitals. These native sores in childhood are considered to be healthy, but in later years they are horrible. Harry, however, who to me was as bad as a leper, still considered himself quite a buck, and was rather "cheeky." Now, I could stand "cheek" from Juno, a P.M., but I wanted to kick Harry, who had no claims to consideration as being an interesting "study" as a murderer. I had a dislike to him, not only from his forbidding appearance, but because recently he bought another man's wife from Juno—a young, bright girl, who tried to drown herself before being forced into this wretched cur's canoe, to be taken home by him as his household slave. I dare say she would take the first opportunity of running away in a labour vessel, to Fiji or Queensland, when, of course, it would be reported that she had been "stolen."

Harry was our guide, but he walked behind, as became his state of service and his sores. We skirted the waters of the bay for some time. On the east side were the boiling springs, under the rocks upheaved by the great earthquake. At high tide these

were covered, but at low water they bubbled up in natural wells. The water was hot enough to burn my hands, and to boil yams and scald pigs thereat. When the tide just covered them, the temperature was luxurious, and it was then that maids and matrons assembled there to bathe and chatter. At the extreme end of the bay we crossed a broad stretch of sandy beach, which before-time formed the bottom of the harbour, and held Captain Cook's anchors, but by the upheaval of the earthquake it had been converted into eligible water frontages, but with no security of tenure guaranteed by Yasur. In the old days it was, so I was told, just a pleasant walk to the summit of the volcano, which is not 700 feet high, but at the present time the road is of the worst quality, even if we had not prolonged the agony for hours by losing our way. Through the bush we mounted up and down for two hours along a track which was just broad enough for one person to travel. I stumbled over the boles of trees beneath me, and smashed my helmet and tore my puggaree in the branches above. It was very hot and close. Only once after ascending from the beach did we obtain a view of the sea, or inhale a breath of fresh air from the ocean. The soil was light, and yielded beneath our feet, making our progress fatiguing. We passed many garden patches, but of natives we saw none. The track diverged in many places, but Harry, from the rear, confidently directed our course. But where were the villages from which friendly natives, with an eye to tobacco, were to escort us; where were the green cocoa-nuts to quench my thirst? I verily believe Harry the leprous had been taking us by out-of-the-way tracks, to keep all the *backsheesh* to himself, as he suddenly halted, and confessed he had lost the way. Being sworn at, he got sulky, and it came out that he had never been on this road before. I wondered what his market value was in pigs, if I should take his life.

We had a rest, Harry shouted, and we "cooeed," but no response. On again, making a long detour, when from a piece of open ground, all sulphur and steam, a few houses were seen on the cliff above. We climbed thither. There were steps cut in the rocks, and I began to see why the natives lived in such unpromising localities. These homes could be defended with little difficulty against any attacks from other tribes. But scanty vegetation grew around. There was no

banyan tree to overshadow the kava house. The habitations of these bushmen were, if possible, more squalid than those of the "saltwater" tribes. We could make a full inspection, for there was no one at home—not a soul in three villages we passed through. Then Harry told us that this being the time for yam planting, all the men who might not be fighting were working, with the women and children, in the cultivated patches, which were nearer the salt water. In the bush around Yasur nothing would grow to maturity. "Bad fellow, Yasur," said Harry, "make him no good yam, no good nut." My companion Gottfrey had not yet lived twelve months on Tanna, and this was the first time he had been on this road, and being ignorant that the yam patches were so far from the villages, was out in his calculations as to our finding guides. I should not have cared much if we could only have procured water, but there was nothing to drink for miles around. On the few tall weedy palms there were some small green nuts. Harry, of course, could not climb, so there was no resource but to cut off the stems with Snider bullets. But the nuts were so soft and immature, that when I made a good shot, and brought one whole to the ground, it smashed up into a pulp. At last Gottfrey found a nut containing, perhaps, a gill of fluid. He persisted that he was not thirsty, and I had very great difficulty in making him take his share.

All abroad as we were in our reckoning, we determined to see Yasur or die. The hills on this side were higher than the volcano, and we had nothing to guide us but the continuous roar. Onward we went, up and down. There were great cracks and fissures in the ground, from which hot steam was rising. I thought one might get a good medicated vapour bath by standing over these. We dived down again into a deep bush. There was not a sound to be heard but the faint echo of rifle shots in the distance, a sound so common on Tanna, that one hardly noticed it. The natives were fighting somewhere, that was all. In one place were two or three large stones, with holes quarried out in them—perhaps to act as mortars, perhaps to hold sufficient rain-water to afford a drink to the passing traveller. Harry shouted till he was hoarse; at last a faint reply was heard. Coming nearer and nearer, the voice resolved itself into that of a naked little nigger—a good youngster, who was not particularly

scared, and agreed to guide us to the foot of the volcano. He was nicely behaved, and I could not help thinking his manners were very much superior to those of any average white boy in England or the colonies who might have been hauled up to escort a party of foreigners, of whose language he knew not a word. Yet he was a heathen and a possible cannibal!

On again, through more empty villages, struggling through scrub, the ground cracking in many places, steam freshly bursting out in the midst of the bush, and parching up all the vegetation. Down into a deep dell, an oasis, which Yasur appeared to have spared. High banyan trees, brilliant crotons, rare ferns; lizards, streaks of shining colour, running across the path; gorgeous butterflies flitting around our heads. Then desolation once more. All life appeared to be blasted. The bones of a dead pig bleached on a bed of sulphur. That spring of water was poisonous. All around Nature was fatal to life! This narrow and difficult path was one which certainly did not lead to heaven. Nothing lived but a little flower, which, blooming in such a spot, was as great a rarity as the *edelweiss* growing amidst Alpine snow. Of animal life I had as yet seen nothing, but now something ran down that gully. A small pig? A hare? No, it was a large bird. I had hardly time to notice it. Through Harry I learnt that it did not fly, but made its nest in the ground. I fancy that it was something like the large *ki-wee*, the apteryx of New Zealand. I offered our little guide a Golconda of tobacco for the body or eggs of one of these birds, but I imagine, from Harry's vague remarks, that they were considered sacred. Future travellers may be able to secure specimens. We had passed several old craters covered with sulphur deposits. The ground was hollow beneath us. I found specimens of a rock which I took to be the same as the New Zealand greenstone. The natives made charms out of it, as in Maoriland. Nickel, I believe, in small quantities, was also found here. But, all in all, the walk to the volcano was not in itself highly interesting; and when at last, after climbing a steep hill, I found that we had to descend again before making a last burst up to the summit, I began to think that the game was not worth the candle. As it is the last straw which breaks the camel's back, it was this last half mile which filled up the measure of my discontent.

We stumbled up through the yielding ashes, with the roar of Yasur, which to our fancy increased, and was more threatening, ringing in our ears. Although on the windward side, ashes fell all around. My green veil, first procured to keep off the sand-flies on Lake Manapouri, was now most useful in protecting my eyes.

Half-way up the cone the natives stopped, and would go no further. They would not speak, and Harry said, "No good talk here." They looked round as if expecting to see evil spirits tumbling down the hill-side. When we left them they retreated for a distance with all the manner

> "Of one who on a lonely road
> Doth march in fear and dread,
> And having once looked round, walks on
> And turns no more his head,
> Because he knows a frightful fiend
> Doth close behind him tread."

At last I was on the summit of Yasur; the two craters were before me. Hundreds of feet below the molten lava was seething, a very hell-broth. One caught glimpses of flames shedding a lurid glare on the steam and smoke which filled the crater. There was a perpetual roar beneath, and the explosions, which seemed, now we were there, to be continuous, were like salvoes of artillery. The ground trembled; away to leeward there was a pillar of smoke and a shower of ashes and small stones. I had heard of rocks, tons in weight, being thrown up by Yasur, but I was not fortunate enough to see this, neither was I so lucky as Mr. Leo Layard, H.M. vice-consul at Noumea, who narrated to me how he dodged the burning masses of lava which fell around him. Neither did I go to the edge of the crater and drop a stone therein. I stood a respectable distance off, as the ground, crumbling beneath our feet, showed us the danger of our being swallowed up if too foolhardy. I would have sat down, but that the scoria was too hot. Luckily, we had stout boots, which protected our feet. The air was parched and fiery; we were covered with burning dust; to breathe seemed to dry up and scorch one's lungs. There was a charnel-house smell. Thinking first of a Walpurgis Night, one got round to the idea that a drink would be acceptable. Then I tried to form some idea of

the extent of Yasur; but I gave it up. It was impossible to see to the bottom on account of the smoke and steam. It was impossible to see to the other side; and to walk around—if not impossible—would have been highly dangerous. I roughly calculated that this was about the same size as the extinct crater of Mount Eden, near Auckland, with a depth of some hundreds of feet. The prominent feature was steam. This, the active force, overshadowed everything. It was some time before I saw a first-class explosion. Then there were certainly some very large rocks thrown up, but I should hesitate in saying any of them were above a hundredweight. Lumps of red-hot scoria were blown to leeward, but the majority of the stones and rocks just fell back again. At this time the lava below boiled up like molten iron in a blast furnace, then it sank again and was hidden by the steam.

If the walk up to Yasur was not particularly enticing, the view from the summit, where not hidden by the clouds of smoke and steam, was a lovely one. When out at sea, looking at Tanna from the SSE., the volcano appeared to be in quite a separate island, and now, tracing the course of flat plain and valley, from sea to sea, around the range of which Yasur is the outlet, I was of opinion that this, at a distant period, was disconnected with the main land. The large lake in the centre of the plain helped to form the link in the distinctly-marked course. It is said that this lake in flood time overflows through crevices into the volcano, and that then the explosions are more active. The natives said that the water of this lake was not good to drink, and that it was the abode of great black devils which ate men. Gottfrey opined that these were alligators, or, perhaps, some antediluvian or submarine monsters "corralled" in the lone waters when the volcanic upheaval took place which, as I told him, joined Yasur to Tanna. I think they may be only great eels, like those in the New Zealand lakes. If so, there is another connecting link with Maori-land. It might, however, be merely tradition. But this lake must be well worth visiting; from Yasur's height it looked a perfect gem. Strange zoological discoveries may possibly be made there. The way to it would be from Sulphur Bay, along a level track; and from that side, too, the ascent of Yasur would be far easier. I wish I had tried it from that point.

From Yasur I got the best view I know of in the New Hebrides, except, perhaps, from Mr. Glissan's at Siveree. If the volcano, with its steam, and noise, and heat, and smoke, and bad smells, offended you by a sort of ostentatious vulgarity of physical force, the peaceful charm of the mountain valleys and palmy plains on one side, and the calm turquoise sea on the other, soothed one. And you wanted soothing after such a tramp. But I did not feel inclined to linger. My soul panted for water, or *kava,* or anything drinkable. "Come on," I said to Gottfrey, and we turned our backs on the crater, and rejoined our two guides. I made a fancy sketch of "Old Horny" in my note-book, which I showed the little "nig.," as being the counterfeit presentment of Yasur taken from life in his fiery home. When we came to the track which led to his village, "Nono," as he called himself, was sent on his way rejoicing in the possession of half-a-dozen sticks of tobacco, with which he would propitiate his mother and father for being absent from the evening meal. The likeness of Yasur which he took with him I dare say will be preserved as a family relic, and handed down from father to son until those bush tribes are brought under the influence of Christianity, which, at the present rate of missionary progress, will yet take a century or two. I was really very pleased with our naked little *cicerone.* He was as courteous in all his actions as any European or American youngster brought up in the most refined nursery. Harry the leprous attempted to tax the boy's good-nature by making him carry the basket containing our bottle, but I soon put a stop to that. I had bullied Harry so much that day, that I expect, if he dared, he would have taken a pot shot at me.

That homeward walk to Port Resolution from Yasur will ever remain in my mind like the shadow of a hideous nightmare. We had been put in the right track by Nono, and our course was a mile or two shorter, but, tired as I was, it was all too long. Night fell, and although the full moon rose, it was dark and gloomy in the bush paths. Where the clear beams did enter they cast weird shadows across the path, in which I stumbled. Yasur was groaning and roaring louder than ever. I was not surprised that Harry kept close to me, as if for protection from the evil things which were abroad at night time. In the lone bush, in the mysterious shadows, in the accompaniment of loud

explosions, in the glare which we could see athwart the sky, there was something uncanny which must have impressed the native mind. For myself, I was too tired, too hungry, too thirsty, to be amenable to such influences. I had a good staff, but still tripped over the roots of trees and fell down rocky banks. It was uncomfortable, but at last we reached the shores of Port Resolution. As we lay around the cask sunk by Gottfrey in the sand to collect spring water, and took a long drink, which seemed a foretaste of heaven after our parched throats when viewing Yasur, typical of the other place, I came to the conclusion that ascending volcanoes is a mistake. I do not intend to go up Yasur again until Mr. Morgan's tramway is made, and a good "half-way house" erected.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### GOOD-BYE TO TANNA.

In my diplomatic mission round the coast of Tanna I was often accompanied by the young Norwegian trader, who utilised his time in buying yams with which to feed his labourers. On this blood-stained Tanna, where so many massacres of white men had taken place, and where it was said there had also been so many outrages committed by labour vessels, strange to say, we were always well received. The natives flocked to the shore to greet us, not knowing our business—for all they knew we might have been labour "recruiters." Yet they had no fear, not even when, as sometimes happened, there were only women and children to be seen, the elders of the tribe being away fighting in the bush, from whence we heard the continued firing of musketry. Our programme was to put out a small anchor at the bow and back in, the crew resting on their oars, ready any moment to pull out into deep water. This was the correct plan in recruiting boats, where, for extra safety, an armed man should sit in the bow prepared for action on any sign of danger. If this had been done by the government agent of the *Lavina*, the late massacre at Api would have been avoided; but not one of the rifles on board his boat was loaded, and he was killed with his own Snider, which he had given to one of the savages to try! We always took due precautions.

Perfectly fearless were the women and children. The latter jumped through the surf and clung to the side of the boat. The former, old and young, with the long grass petticoats of matronhood, or the short aprons of virginity, were, in the absence of their lords and masters, familiar and friendly. They had evidently no dread of kidnapping, which I took as a proof that no such thing had existed here at least for a long time. If I had gone into that line of business, I could during my four weeks on Tanna have abducted more than fifty women and children. We cried out for yams, and they crowded around the boat eyeing the "trade

box," which contained tobacco, pipes, beads, paint, calico, "Turkey red," knives, straps, and powder—to them appearing as very treasures of the Ind. They brought us yams or fowls, the very smallest tubers at first, for which they got a stick of tobacco, or a pipeful of beads, *guhmaree*. "More yams," we cried, and the women rushed along the beach to their huts and raked up all the family provisions. I thought sometimes that the bush-fighters would go short of "tucker" on account of our visits. Female nature is the same all the world over; unkind people say that in civilisation the list of household expenses is sometimes "cooked," and a new dress or bonnet obtained without the knowledge of a stingy husband. It is certain that in Tanna young and old womanhood took every advantage of their lords' absence to acquire Turkey red, paint, and beads, as well as pipes and tobacco—for all these charming creatures smoked! They would beg, too, the eyes out of your head. When I took command of the box I was so generous in barter that Kyhn said I would ruin any business. When there were men to meet us, or should they arrive later on, it was different; the women scattered on one side with a prudish semblance of fright at having been brought into communion with the white stranger. So like to their civilised sisters in this also! Sometimes, far out from the shore, we were boarded by some youth, who had breasted his way through the surf, and who sprang into the boat dripping like a young sea god! I am speaking now of villages notoriously heathen and cannibal, where we were previously unknown, and the missionary was mocked at. The confidence thus exhibited was the result of the natives' intercourse with white men through the much-abused labour traffic. The first-comer always established himself as master of the ceremonies. He took possession of us, and yelled to his little brothers and sisters on shore to bring yams, for which he took payment. He would sit near the trade box, which he surveyed all the time with a covetous eye, and kept up a perpetual chatter, giving me, no doubt, what was very useful information, but which I could only acknowledge by the peculiar motion of the eyebrows which, through all the islands, signifies assent, or by *Towra*, or *Ramahsïn*, signifying "good," on the east and west coasts of Tanna respectively. When a friendly feeling was thoroughly established, we went ashore; I to make my speech, which the men mostly understood,

as they had nearly all been to Queensland; the trader Kyhn endeavouring to buy more yams.

The women, as I have said, in the presence of their masters, stood afar off; the gentler sex was not allowed at our caucus meetings. The children, however, who had not yet "done time" in the colonies, and knew no English, came and talked to me confidentially. I could only assent with my eyebrows to what they said. They gathered round me as I took my lunch on the rocks—the mystery of plate, knife, and fork, were shown to them for the first time. To watch me as I ate was evidently a great joy to the lads—a circus to the youthful Australian is nothing to it. At every mouthful I took, so to speak, I got "a hand," and the napkin and its uses brought forth a round of applause. But when, after the manner of Queen Bess and Frenchmen, I took the merrythought of a chicken in my fingers, I completely "brought down the house" at this sign of our common human nature. I broke this bone afterwards with a little maiden aged eight. She trembled with awe at the mystic ceremony, but some bread and jam made her happy. However, for long days her dreams might have been haunted by reminiscences of this ordeal, and should any harm have befallen her—which might the fates forefend!—it would be put down to my wizard arts, the *nahuk* of the white man.

We slept at night in grass huts, both ends open to let out the smoke of the fire. Lying in my hammock I could see, beyond the shade of giant banyan trees, the moon shining on the waters of the ocean. The moan of the surf near at hand was sometimes echoed by the distant roar of the volcano. The "boys" forming our boat's crew lay on the ground beneath me. They were always frightened, and would not stir an inch from our sides. Be it remembered that we were in reputed cannibal villages, and the Tannaman ever bore an evil name with the men of other islands. Yet, with their Australian experiences, the natives were invariably friendly to me. Once only I noticed suspicious signs. Then one man who had served in Maryborough came privately, "Very good you go, some fellow no good he stop." Now, without the knowledge of English this man had acquired, owing to the labour trade, he could not have warned us if he would, and we might have been converted into *ki-ki* by morning. A great change this life to

the frost and snow of Otago and Westland, but it was there that I acquired the stock of health which took me safely through the New Hebrides. A month in the Southern Lake district of New Zealand is admirable training for a voyage in the tropics. Bush life in Tanna is far different to that in dry Australia. From sunset to sunrise the ground exhales noxious emanations which bring disease to any one of delicate health.

Two years before, in San Francisco, my friend, Mr. George E. Barnes, took a book from his shelves. "Have you read 'Poverty and Progress'?" said he. "It is a most remarkable book, by a most remarkable man." Now, as our great country, and particularly the Pacific slope, is always producing remarkable works and men, I took little heed of this at the time, and it is not until lately that I have had leisure to properly study Mr. Henry George's book, which appears from internal evidence to have had an effect in forming the opinions of the "leader" writers in New Zealand and Australia for many months past. Much of it came to me as a revelation, although years ago I preached to the farm labourers of England that their social condition could not be materially alleviated under the present system of land tenure in England. Mr. Henry George may be pleased to know that I read "Poverty and Progress" among the native villages in Western Polynesia, in the midst of the system of primal land tenure to which he refers. "In all primitive societies," says M. Emile de Laveleye in his work, "Primitive Property," "the soil was the joint property of the tribes, and was subject to periodical distribution among all the families, so that all might live by their labour, as Nature has ordained." Mr. Henry George amplifies on this text. I believe this to be true of all the islands of the New Hebrides; but of Tanna I can positively assert it to be the custom. Power may have been concentrated in the hands of some great chief, who has claimed the lands of his tribe, or of those whom he has conquered, as his own, but the rule still holds good. The division of land between individuals or families is only made for temporary industrial purposes; but there is "a recognition of the particular and exclusive right to things which are the result of labour." Thus the land may belong to the clan, but the trees thereon—the presumed result of some sort of labour or cultivation—to an individual. Right to a

tenancy must be held by possession. The Rev. Mr. Gray, of Waisesi, quoted to me a case in which a native of the island of Aniwa holds land in Tanna when he occupies it, but when away it is given to another. Of the ancient custom of periodical distribution there is no question. Near Port Resolution, at that time, the members of a small tribe were claiming its fulfilment, after the death of a powerful chief. They might have to fight for their right, but they would get it.

From this point of view, all the thousands of *hectares* bought by the New Hebrides Company are not worth the paper the "deeds" are written upon. Yet land buying still goes on. The only legal way of acquisition—that is, if you acknowledge these islanders have any rights—would be to give a pension to every member of the tribe and his heirs for ever. The United States Government recognised the justice of this mode of action in the yearly grants voted to the tribes who had been dispossessed of their lands by the westward march of empire. Everywhere the natives are readily induced to sell land; a Snider and ammunition will buy a small farm. Whether they really understand these to be absolute sales to "heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns for ever" I cannot say. Certainly the chiefs have no power so to devise. I was tempted by Juno to buy a piece of ground near Port Resolution, but I not only thought that he had no right to sell, but had a strong opinion, as a disciple of Mr. George, that it would be vicious and immoral of me to buy. Besides, a journalist, like Cæsar's wife, must be above suspicion. He should have no personal interest in the things he describes. If I write favourably of a mining centre, I must not take shares in its claims. If I advocate a new railway route, I must not hold any of the stock. So when I praise the fertile plains and valleys of Tanna, which some day, when the savage inhabitants are all improved off the face of the earth, and when all the sugar lands in Northern Queensland are taken up, will perhaps be opened out and colonised, I must not have part nor lot therein. I, however, prepared a deed of the sale of about ten acres of land in two lots from Juno to the trader Gottfrey Kyhn. The consideration in barter was in value, I suppose, about £10, and was fair payment at ordinary rates. As Kyhn wanted this for the purpose of occupation, and as it was then no good to the natives, I did not see any harm in his having it. If any land sales are recognised

at Tanna, this should be, or, as the legal adviser in the case, I shall lose my reputation.

The next morning, as Juno was cleaning his rifle outside, and the Second Murderer, having expended his last charge of dynamite, was vainly endeavouring to kill some fish with his primitive bow and arrow, there was a cry of "Sail ho!" White wings were on the waves outside the harbour, and two boats were pulling in. They went, however, to the southern corner, a mile away from us. Through the glasses I could see that everything was conducted *en règle*. One boat landed and the other "covered" it. Some returned boys were put on shore, and then the boats returned to the ship without attempting to pay us a visit. Anxious as I was to get away and to send despatches, we jumped into our craft at once and gave chase. It was a long pull, but after a time the vessel hove to, and I boarded the *May Queen*, an old schooner which I remembered visiting in the Brisbane River six years before. Then she had just returned from a voyage, and was full of labour; now she was outward bound, and was sailing for the northern portion of the group for a three months' cruise, and was consequently of no use to me. Captain Dixon was courteous, and tacked to tow us homewards to Port Resolution. He had just come from Aneitium, where he had recruited thirteen natives. One woman he returned at the missionary's request. Aneitium was supposed to be the stronghold of missionary work, and consequently of opposition to the labour trade. Yet these men had come away willingly and gladly. Watching them during the two or three hours I was on board, I came to the conclusion that they were awfully stupid. I would prefer as servant a wild cannibal bushman of Tanna.

On the 21st September there was another cry of "Sail ho!" and the schooner *Caledonia* was seen beating into Port Resolution; but the stars and stripes were absent, and the tricolor flew in their place. So we went in to breakfast much disappointed that Captain Proctor had not returned. But when the skipper came ashore, I was pleased to find that it was my friend Gaspard, formerly of the schooner *Idaho*. The news that "the big fellow white captain" was leaving soon spread, and the natives crowded to the store. I really think they were sorry I was leaving. A being who spoke quietly and gently to them, but with no pretensions to *tabu*; who bought not, neither did

he sell, but occasionally gave away tobacco, and whose payment for services rendered was on a liberal scale, they could not understand. "Monkey" looked quite sorrowful. The "boys" rejoiced in the last gift of new hatchets, and the "Hag" was not forgotten. Every one said, "You come back by-and-by;" and one warrior, "Suppose you come stop help man a Tanna fight *Wee-wees*"—a compliment to my efficiency with rifle and revolver. The young trader mourned over me; he offered me a full partnership in his business, which, if I had had nothing better to do, I would have accepted for six months and studied life in the islands. This simple-hearted Norwegian sailor had the spirit of a true gentleman. I might never see him again, but I would often drink "*skaal*" to the pleasant days spent together around Tanna.*

*En voyage*, I found the *Caledonia* very different to what she had been under the American flag. Everything was changed. Not but what Captain Gaspard was a rare sailor, a true *loup de mer*. Born in the Midi, he had all the fire of the Provençal, and was as fond of poetry and song as an Italian. A good Republican, he sang the Marseillaise and other patriotic songs in a manner which enchanted me. In the English school in which I was bred we were taught that, although France might have had a few good generals, a certain Buonaparte to wit, yet on the sea she was nowhere. One learnt all about Nelson and Cook, but never of Jean Bart and La Perouse. Gaspard reminded me somewhat of the brave Norman sailor of French history. The mate of the *Caledonia* was most courteous to me, but in the working of the ship everything was different now to what it had been under the rule of Captain Proctor and his mate George, and I began to understand why the natives disliked the French so much. Instead of quiet orders given, quickly obeyed, there was nothing but noise and bustle—"*Mille tonnerres*," "*Cochon*," "*'Cré nom de Dieu*"—with blackguard English words. There were two Lifu boys on board, splendid fellows, and good sailors, but used to Englishmen. One was a regular young Hercules—a model for a sculptor—as fine a native as Ratu Tim, before that

* Gottfrey Kyhn a year afterwards was murdered by the natives, shot whilst sleeping in his boat off Ingofu Point, where one night we had camped side by side in a *kava* house.

son of Thakambau ran to fat. He carried me over the reef, when embarking, with as much ease as if I had been an infant. He was like a granite column beneath me, his muscles hard as an athlete's. The mate swore at and bullied these boys, who considered themselves the very salt of the earth as compared to other Polynesians. The consequence was they only looked stupid, but quietly they exchanged glances of contempt. To me the same men were courteous, one might almost say gentlemanly. It was my English speech which did it.

The Malabar cook, alas! had left; the only one of the previous crew now on board was Eliki of Vanikoro, who lately piloted the *Bruat* to that island when the anchors and guns of La Perouse were discovered. Eliki told me of the pyramid or cairn built on the hill-side at Vanikoro, which Captain Macleod imagined to contain the records of the fate of the great French navigator. Some day I hope to see this. Eliki was steward now, and in the matter of dirt was fully equal to our French cook—an ex-convict. We sailed along the east coast of Tanna and Erromango, and made Port Vila in twenty-four hours. Here I found Captain Macleod in the schooner *Idaho*—now in charge of my friend George, late mate of the *Caledonia*. He would not sail with a French skipper, and mourned the departure of Captain Proctor. "Every one who ever sailed with him liked 'the old man.' If he comes back again I will go mate with him for less wages than any one else," said George. His father was a Greek, and he had been educated by the Marists, yet his inclinations were all towards the Anglo-Saxon instead of to the Gallic race.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### ERATAP.

I FOUND Captain Macleod was jubilant at recent good cargoes of copra sent to Noumea, which would help to pay the working expenses of the New Hebrides Company. True to his salt, he magnified the prospects of this association, and gloried in the hope that the French flag might shortly be raised over these islands. "Everybody wants the French here," said Captain Macleod. "What have the colonies got to do with us? The natives will be glad when this is annexed. Won't they, Narco? You want Frenchman here, not Englishman, eh?" Captain Macleod put this leading question to a Vila chief, in a manner which made him assent "E-ess." "There, Narco says he wants the French here; I'll warrant I could go round all the islands with you, and ask all the natives, and they'd say the same." To this I replied, "Narco did not say he wanted the French here, but he assented to please you. I dare say you could make the natives say anything; it is you they know, not the French Company. But when Donald Macleod is clear of the Company he'll be as good a Briton as he was before. No one can blame you for being faithful to your employers' interest, but don't try to humbug me too much." Captain Macleod might have heard of my inquiries in this and other islands, but he did not know that I carried the voice of Tanna in my portmanteau, and I laughed in my sleeve as I argued with him.

During the day that we lay at Vila there was one thing which particularly struck me. Very few canoes came off to us, and Little Buttercup did not come on board now that the *tricolor* was flying over the *Caledonia*. They did not appear to be so anxious to see the ship, now that she was French, as they were when it was under the command of Captain Proctor, labour trader though he was! But when we started at early morn for Eratap, a single canoe came out from the Island of Vila, and a woman paddled quickly towards the ship. As we had to tack

several times, she reached us before we cleared the bay, and wanted to be taken on board. She was sent away disconsolate, and as we rounded the point I could see another canoe with two boys in it pursuing her. Poor wretch! I expect her husband had beaten her in the night, and she thought to get off in a labour vessel and escape his tyranny. After this outbreak she would, perhaps, be still more brutally treated. But is the martyrdom of woman only confined to savage societies?

We passed Pango Point and the Bay of Erakor, and traced the course of the great salt-water lagoon which extended inland far into the bosom of the hills. A few miles further along the coast, and we made two or three smart tacks inside a double line of reefs, and cast anchor near a small island, close to which was the hull of a wrecked vessel, the *Surprise*, of Queensland. A schooner of 140 tons, her lines were beautifully symmetrical. She must have been a model of a ship, but perhaps it was a good thing that she was lost, for amongst her cargo were such items as 35 Sniders, 100 muskets, and 11 cases of powder. Many a white man might have perished by this traffic, I reflected. But unfortunately the wreck was bought by the manager of the New Hebrides Company, and the weapons might yet prove fatal in natives' hands. Of this abominable traffic in firearms, carried on from New Caledonia and Queensland, I shall speak more fully hereafter.

There is nothing to strike one in the surroundings of Eratap. From a descriptive point of view, these islands become after a time dreadfully monotonous. Coral reefs, surf, white sand at low water, at high tide dense vegetation meeting the water, cocoa-nut palms, mountain background, low grass huts, niggers more or less naked, dirty, and nasty—that is a summary of what one finds on all the isles of Western Polynesia. But after a long row ashore I found something different in the village or town of Eratap to any place I had yet seen. Passing by a few fine canoes drawn up on the beach under a great banyan tree, we stepped over the stile in the cane fence which surrounded the village. Compared with what I had yet seen, here was decency, cleanliness, and order. The rank vegetation had been cleared away, there was little to offend the eye or nostril, the few cocoa-nut, banana, and bread-fruit trees were just sufficient to give a pleasant shade. Instead of the foul huts, fit only as lairs

for wild beasts, there were two or three houses with limed walls and good roofs, built in the same style as Mr. Glissan's at Siveree, or the trader's at Port Resolution. The low native houses, too, were of a better class, with long openings at the side under broad eaves, and closed sleeping apartments at each end. In the centre compartments—to enter which one had to stoop very low, and step over protecting logs—the natives ate and lounged on mats, with fresh air blowing in from the sea. Wonderful to relate, the men and women were all clothed, the former in shirts, the latter in cotton dresses. The raised bamboo frames, *battas*, on which copra was drying, showed that they were industrious in order to supply their wants. The young chief, who in addition to his shirt wore a felt hat, was familiarly addressed by Captain Gaspard as "Dick," which was his name in the trading world, although "in religion"—that is, to the missionaries—he was known as "Calameta." He wished to know when Captain Macleod would be there, as he had yams and copra ready. The French Company of the New Hebrides Dick knew nothing about; it was the British trader, Macleod, with whom he wished to deal.

We walked around the village. Besides the order and decency visible, it was particularly pleasing to find an utter absence of firearms, so different from what I had seen elsewhere. All praise to the missionary for what he had done in this respect. Whilst I thought this, the Rev. Mr. Mackenzie, who had been paying a visit to Eratap from his home at Erakor, came towards us. He shook hands cordially with me, and I introduced my friends, Captain Gaspard, and M. Bernier, of the New Hebrides Company. We were at once invited into the chief's house, which, with its whitewashed walls and neat mats on the floor, was beautifully clean and orderly. It was divided into three rooms, the only ornaments being a few pictures from English illustrated papers. We had a long talk with Mr. Mackenzie on copra, labour, mission-work, and annexation. I congratulated him on the appearance of the village. His reply was modest, "I don't want to claim too much credit for that. The young chief here is a very nice young man; he sets a good example, and helps me in every way." "It is a case of the seed falling on good soil," I suggested. "I hope so," said Mr. Mackenzie. "I don't want to boast, but when the *Surprise* was wrecked, the

people here gave all the assistance they could, and I don't think a single article was stolen." Considering in my own mind what I had seen of the result of mission labours elsewhere, I was of the opinion that the soil had as much to do with the result as the seed, although I wished to give the sower every credit. "I like the people to trade," continued Mr. Mackenzie; "it enables them to buy dress and little comforts for themselves, and so I encourage them to make copra. The only thing I ever object to, is the women going on board the ships, or liquor being supplied to the men. But Captain Macleod, who has the trade all round here, is a just man. He has, I believe, always dealt fairly with the natives, and he always pays them in money, letting them buy what they want where they like." "I suppose the natives don't know anything of the New Hebrides Company?" I asked. "Oh no! It is Macleod and Macleod's ships they know and trade with. If, when he sold his interest to the Company, he had not continued as manager, the trade could have been easily taken away."

I expressed a wish to see the church. As we walked down, Mr. Mackenzie asked, "I beg your pardon, but are you in the labour trade?" This was the second time I had been mistaken for a "slaver," and I was rather pleased to think that I looked the part. I was also pleased to have been received so courteously by Mr. Mackenzie, under this misconception. His encouragement of the natives to work and to live decently, was, in my eyes, as much to be commended as the spiritual part of his work, and was exceptional. At Aneitium, I heard there was a grand church, not half filled, and that all the natives were Christians; yet the Rev. Mr. Laurie, of that mission, said to me when the trader, Gottfrey Kyhn, proposed to go to the Island of Aniwa to buy copra from the natives, "It is not worth making if you cannot give more than a dollar a bag." That was, he would have had the natives remain idle, for they had no other work to do! The church here at Eratap was built of concrete, formed of coral rock and lime. It had a grass roof and open lattice windows, with sitting accommodation for about one hundred. The seats were on benches formed of rock and lime, making a good concrete. A small wooden table and a chair were in the east. There were three pamphlets in the native language, respectively translations of part of Genesis, Acts, and some hymns.

Mr. Macdonald, at Havannah Harbour, had made other translations of the Scripture into the dialect in vogue there. Questioning Mr. Mackenzie, he admitted that, in many cases, what at first appeared to the stranger distinct languages, might only be dialects, and a common vehicle for mental communication might have been discovered. But, owing to the peculiar constitution of the New Hebrides mission, each reverend gentleman "played a lone hand," and got his own idea of what the language of the natives might be, and then he invented it. The Melanesian mission, I believe, has one common language for Church purposes for all the islands where its operations are extended, and the Hebrides mission might well have followed the example.

Dick, or Calameta, officiated here at Eratap on Sundays, and to him and his people Mr. Mackenzie gave every credit. At this station, and at Erakor and Pango, there were reputed to be 190 Christian natives. Mr. Mackenzie was very anxious I should visit him at Erakor, and see the "home station," which I had intended to do, but for the lucky chance of meeting him here. Now, I had to away to Havannah Harbour, to seize the first opportunity of sending away despatches, and obtaining a passage to Queensland. Erakor had been professedly a Christian settlement for over thirty years, native teachers from Samoa, trained by the London Missionary Society, having been landed there as far back as 1845, but it was not until 1864 that the first white missionary was resident there. This was the Rev. Donald Morrison, of Nova Scotia, but he only lived there three years, and died of consumption in Auckland in 1869. In 1866 the Rev. James Cosh, now of Balmain, Sydney, was stationed at Pango, a few miles distant, but he only remained there four years. Mr. Mackenzie came from Nova Scotia in 1872, and settled first at Pango, but afterwards removed to Erakor, which is a small island close to the shore, reputed to be healthier than the mainland, besides gathering the faithful together in a natural corral. "Here," Mr. Mackenzie said, "we have a fence around our church made of what were once their heathen gods. These gods are made from a very hard kind of a tree, and they stand a long time. They are about ten feet long, and are carved and hollowed out. They set them up, a great many of them together, in their dancing-ground, and when struck with the fist, they give a hollow sound, which is heard at a distance." These "gods" were

the wooden drums used through all the islands, and which one could often buy for a few sticks of tobacco. Mr. Mackenzie had sown well on good soil; it was a pity no one could be found to plough the stony ground at Vila and Male close at hand, where the people were shamelessly profligate, and mocked at the missionary and his works.

Mr. Mackenzie sailed away in a large double canoe accompanied by a body-guard of half-a-dozen of the faithful. He quite won the hearts of Monsieur Bernier and Captain Gaspard by his pleasant conversation and courtesy, and they compared him very favourably with the Marist priests in New Caledonia. Monsieur Bernier vowed that he would always be willing to oblige the Protestant missionary in the future. Politeness goes such a long way, and costs so little! I was very pleased to have been the means of bringing about the *entente cordiale* between Mr. Mackenzie and my French friends, *employés* of the New Hebrides Company though they were. He himself, be it said, was a man of few prejudices, and lamented that there should be any trouble about the island of Iririki, of which he possessed the original title-deeds; but I encouraged the missionary to be stiff-necked in this respect, and resist French aggression.

Pleasure being over, we rowed back to the ship, to which the natives were now bringing copra. In the morning the trading commenced. The copra was paid for in cash at the rate of £6 a ton, which, although giving a very good profit to the Company, was yet a fair price. One man could make a ton of copra in a month with the assistance of his wife and children to bring in the nuts; the only trouble was to obtain enough nuts. Yams were bought for "trade" at the rate of £3 a ton. Manchester calicoes, dresses for wives, rice, plates even, were principally taken. There was not so much demand for tobacco and pipes, and none at all for ammunition. The confidence which the people had in Captain Macleod is proved by the fact that they accepted I O U's for money or goods, to be paid at the store at Vila. The operation of weighing the copra, and calculating what each man should have as his share, taxed all the ingenuity both of M. Bernier and Dick. Due and just weight and count were given. Then the process of choosing calico from the trade-box was lengthy. I took possession of this, and effected some smart sales for cash. I considered that

I had now sufficient experience to run a trading vessel or a copra station in the South Seas.

Loaded up with copra and yams, we returned to Port Vila, and from thence to Havannah Harbour. As we were beating up inside Protection Island a red boat, filled with natives, was seen pulling up near shore. Macleod and Gaspard looked through the glass. "Long Peter" was the verdict of both. They referred to the one white man, who was steering. He, I was told, was the recruiter of the labour vessel *Lizzie*, which had become notorious about that time from doings at Ambrym, it having been asserted that boys had been "stolen" there by this recruiter, and that Captain Belbin was killed in revenge for his treachery. If I were able to get a passage in this ship I should certainly learn something of the inner life of a "slaver." For my own pleasure, I would have preferred to have gone north to Santo, and to have seen the golden land of old Quiros; but, if I neglected this opportunity, it would be weeks before another presented itself. "That captain will never take you," I was told. "If he does, he'll black you and sell you for a nigger," was another suggestion which inspired me with a still further wish to take a voyage in the *Lizzie*. The minute we cast anchor near the hulk I was rowed off to the labour vessel. The decks were crowded with natives, but of these I took no notice, although the boys who came with me were instructed to go round the decks, and make a few inquiries. I was received by the captain, a good-looking young man, who invited me into the cabin, and then I expressed my urgent need of a passage to Queensland. "To what part?" I was asked. "To Mackay." Well, the *Lizzie* sailed for Townsville the next day, and that was near enough, but this was not a passenger ship, and I should be obliged to rough it, even if terms were satisfactory. I offered a sum which was accepted as sufficient, if matters could be arranged. I was introduced to the captain's wife, and she, being consulted, did not object. My name luckily is a common one. As the captain humorously said, when I asked if he knew it, he "had heard it before;" but he had no idea of my mission, and my explanation that I had been in Tanna looking after copra stations was explicit as well as being truthful. I looked a thorough "beach-comber" then. Further tempting him, however, I asked, "I suppose if I give you a cheque?"

The answer, "Well, I would prefer cash; no offence, you know," was satisfactory. So it was arranged.

Captain Macleod was astonished at my success in negotiating a passage, and we had a "last night" together, which, however, did not prove to be the last night, as "Long Peter" went off early the next morning to recruit. The *Lizzie* had 117 "head" of labour on board, and the captain wished to make up the six score. Peter, however, only obtained two more hands. Toby was glad to see me back at Havannah Harbour, and confided to me his disgust at "*man-a-wee-wee*—Flenchman." Another "last night," and next morning Captain Vos came ashore to fetch me and my baggage and cases of medical comforts. Good-bye to Captain Macleod, whose kindness I hoped to return when I met him in the colonies; then I turned to Toby. "Captain ship, he buy me go along Queensland; suppose you come along a me." "Yes," said Toby, putting his little black hand in mine. "But you haven't got your clothes, Toby," said Captain Macleod. "Good-bye, Toby," I said, as the boy ran off. We were in the boat when a little black figure came running out of the house. We had pushed off, and Toby was on the shore waving one hand to us to stop, and carrying his wardrobe of cotton dress and pocket handkerchief in the other. "Me go," he cried. Then, when he saw that he was really left, he sat down on the beach, like Niobe, bathed in tears, and I heard him ejaculate "—— Flenchman," which was the greatest term of opprobrium Toby knew. Poor little fellow; but still an ungrateful little beggar, for though I was always proud of the power I can exercise over children and dogs, still Toby should not have been oblivious to the kindnesses Captain Macleod heaped upon him. "Good-bye, little nigger; I am bound through the islands to Townsville this 29th of September, with 119 of your colour as fellow-passengers on board the *Lizzie*."

Sails were bent. There was a noise and confusion of many tongues, men and boys chattering in a score of dialects as they pulled at the ropes. The labour of the recruits was also utilised at the capstan in heaving up the anchor. "*Ita*" was the word of command used through all the islands, which stands for "quick" or "altogether, boys." "*Manoc*" meant "finish" or "stop." With much crying of "*Ita*" and shouting of "*Manoc*" we got under weigh.

# CHAPTER XXVIII.

## TO ANEITIUM.

On October 10th we were off Aneitium, the Anuatom of Captain Cook, which for thirty-five years had been the head-quarters of the New Hebrides Mission. The bold outlines of its mountains, 3,000 feet high, reminded me somewhat of Fiji, and I amused myself by telling our native passengers that it was "Viti" we were steering for. There was surprise and horror at first. Then a few of the old hands looked at the land and told me that I "plenty gammon." This repugnance to emigrate to Fiji I could not thoroughly account for; I merely state the fact. We approached the south side near Flat Rock. Round to the west was Inyung Island and the harbour of Anelcahaut, now celebrated for its native church—in old days a port of call or rendezvous for sandalwood traders and whalers, who bought and fought with the natives after the manner of the time and people. The first white man who landed at Aneitium was killed and eaten; and as, by all accounts, the inhabitants were reputed to be bloodthirsty and cruel cannibals, I cannot blame the sailors and traders for plying their rifles in self-defence, and administering such wholesome lessons as caused the white race to be respected on the island. But the natives nowadays do not impress one like those in the northern portion of the group—whether they are meek and mild because they are Christians, or whether, naturally liable to be easily led and impressed, they become Christians, is an open question.

For fifty years Aneitium has been the resort of trading vessels; for thirty-five years missionaries have laboured there; for twenty-five years the natives have all been nominally Christian; so that "missionary" work—in the true sense of the word — has been finished. Many white families have lived there, but death and misfortune removed them nearly all. At one time there were sixteen Marist priests at Anelcahaut; in fact, these were there when Dr. Geddie and

his associate (Mr. Archibald) landed; but before the latter so lamentably fell away from grace, as narrated in Dr. Geddie's life, and left for Australia, the Roman Catholic missionaries had departed for more promising spiritual pastures. At one time, little ladies who now mingle in the first circles in Brisbane and London, ran about, I dare say without any stockings, on the shores of the deserted isle of Inyung. Aneitium then boasted a native population of 3,000, but rapidly decreasing; now it is not much over 1,000, and there are only four white families, including the missionaries. Whaling, trading, cotton-planting—all have "fizzled out;" and but for the visits of a few labour vessels and the mission ship *Dayspring*, Aneitium would be completely out of the world. Compared with other islands in the New Hebrides, it does not appear capable of sustaining any great population. The mountains seem to rise sheer from the shore to the summit, tier upon tier of precipitous hills, with very few patches of level ground on the beach. There are deep ravines, and indications of a central valley high up in the hills, but, altogether, very little ground available for cultivation, for much of the red soil which crops up so plentifully is of a barren character. In shade and outline, Aneitium greatly resembles some parts of the coast of New Caledonia, but instead of the weird *niaouli* tree, the wood on the mountain slopes is kauri pine and other heavy timber. There are a few cocoa-nuts in clumps along the beach, but the general vegetation does not, as seen through the glasses, appear to be essentially tropical. It more resembles that of Norfolk Island.

As we slowly coasted along to windward all the day, there were no signs of life nor habitation, although the numerous burnt patches on the hill-sides for yam plantations showed that there was population somewhere. The boat was got ready to lower should there be any signs of "smoke ho!" or "smoko" on the beach. This was a signal given to all labour vessels. The trade box was also filled, and "Long Peter" was prepared to go ashore, ready and anxious to deliver his celebrated emigration lecture, in a series of object lessons explanatory, as per tobacco, pipes, beads, and Turkey red, of the advantages which accrue to the Polynesian recruit for sunny Queensland. But it was late before I spied the first black figure on the beach, shortly joined by three others. They lighted a fire when they saw us sailing

away, but Captain Vos would not let the boat go off to what after all might only be "plenty gammon." Standing off from Port Patrick, something white on shore attracted our attention. Through the glass one saw that clothes were hanging out to dry—perhaps the linen shirts of some native preacher. This was a decisive evidence of civilisation, and I record it with pleasure: as a rule the natives of the New Hebrides, if they occasionally bathe or wash themselves, have no idea of purifying such few rags as they may possess. Tanna now loomed up ahead and Fotuna abeam. It was three and a half months since the *Lizzie* obtained her first recruit from the latter island. An old man this, who now looked fondly at his home as he munched his biscuit over the taffrail to leeward, so that not a crumb might fall on the deck, and into the hands of an enemy to make *nahuk* of. All that night I watched the glare of the volcano of Yasur on Tanna, and wished that I could be ashore there to again drink "*Skaal!*" with honest Gottfrey. Early in the morning Peter got the materials for his emigration speech ready in the trade box, and with a crew of four Sandwich boys we pulled ashore into Port Patrick, ready to recruit or to buy supplies of food.

There were a number of houses visible through the palms on the shore, and on a rising bluff was a white plaster building which, by its surroundings, I took to be a missionary's residence. One could not mistake the neatness which the brethren evidenced in everything appertaining to their houses. The healthy situation of this house, too, pointed it out as belonging to a missionary, for everywhere in the islands the brethren were renowned for choosing the best sites for their homes. But this could not belong to one of them. Peter had never been here before, and we were totally ignorant of what we might see and who we might meet on land; but the mission station of Aname, which was on this side of the island, I read, was "in a low and unhealthy situation." This was certainly not it. Our boat, having been so long out of water, leaked considerably, and I had to work my passage in baling it out. There was a horseshoe-shaped reef stretching out far from the shore here, on which there was little water at this low tide. The walls of coral rock built on the reef, enclosing large spaces as fish-ponds, were also a barrier to our progress, and often our boys had to jump out and push the boat over these. In low water, large fish were

often left in these ponds, and on the walls near the shore were a number of boys, who ran away at our approach, greatly to my disgust, as well as to Peter's. I had seen boats out recruiting, but had never before had the chance of taking part in the business, so I was very anxious to begin. We had not the Government Agent on board, but that was his affair. As a matter of fact, the Queensland Government Agents hardly ever go in the boats, and, really, I don't see that they are much use there. When the recruits are brought to the ship to be "signed on," it can be easily seen if they come willingly or not. The Government Agent also, cannot dog the recruiters' steps along every yard of the beach, or attempt to controvert all the arguments he may use in attracting the recruits.

There were some cattle which attracted my attention, as giving some promise of fresh beef, but they, as well as the natives, retired into the bush at our approach. Man and beast were alike sulky here. I got ahead of Peter, and followed the fine bull, who turned, and seeing my red sash pawed the earth, and making hostile demonstrations, attempted to lash himself into a fury; but as I did not scare, but made a quick advance, yelling out the Toreador's song, he executed a strategic movement backwards. Then inside a stockade fence I saw some natives, and a boy in pants and shirt, whom I at first took to be a white. The cleared paddock could never belong to natives, even if the cows did. I said, "Good morning." They stared. Speaking to them again kindly in the English language they turned their backs and walked away, not taking the slightest notice of my questions. I had heard that this was the way the natives were instructed to treat all strangers landing at Aneitium; but my temper was not equal to it. "Here, you idiot, do you *sabe* what this is?" and I threw a card, that is, a stick of tobacco, over the fence at the last man. That fetched him, and he thrust it in the belt which kept up his *sulu*, and stood still whilst I asked questions. These people, however, appeared to know very little English, but could tell me that the "*bullumakou*," as all cattle were called there, belonged to the missionary, and that everything, in fact, was his—at least "missionary," was the only answer I could get. Peter, however, came along, and, in his wheedling way, talked to them in broken *bêche-de-mer*. They hesitated, and were lost, for they followed to the water's

edge, and, the boat having proceeded after us, the wonders of the trade-box were displayed to them. Peter led them as the piper did the rats of Hamelin, and he made me feel my inferiority in dealing with natives.

But while I vainly endeavoured to make the "niggers," as I called them in my heart, understand that we wanted fowls, eggs, bananas, and every description of *ki-ki*, a white man, preceded by two natives bearing freshly-painted doors, came along the beach. It was Mr. Laurie, whom I had seen at Ambrym and Tanna. He was as surprised to see me as I was to see him. I explained the reason of my appearance, and he told me that this was the mission station of Aname, but that he had lately built himself a new house on the bluff, as he suffered from fever at the residence on the beach, occupied by Mr. Inglis and his family for so many years. Mr. Laurie courteously asked me up to his house. I accepted the invitation on behalf of the *Argus*, leaving Peter to give his emigration lecture, the missionary telling me that he "never speaks to any of these men." As we walked up to the house, Mr. Laurie related the following little parable:—"In the little village in which I lived in Scotland there was none who would do the dirty work of emptying the cess-pits, &c., but an Irishman. We looked upon him as the lowest of the low. In the same way I consider every one connected with the labour trade as the scum of society. They are no better than scavengers." Mr. Laurie retired to put on his store clothes, and overawe me with the effulgency of clean linen, whilst I meditated on the truly Christian spirit he displayed. I failed to evolve a complete connection between the Irish scavenger and the labour traders. Had Peter, however, been a hot-headed Celt, instead of a cool Scotchman, there might have been some fun if the story had been retailed to him.

When Mr. Laurie returned I asked him his experiences of labour traders. This gentleman, who was not ordained, had only been four years out from Scotland, and his principal grounds of belief were missionary works of old time. He evidently came out here full of zeal for the mission cause, and with a rooted opinion that all other white men in these seas were beneath his notice. "You cannot exactly prove this thing wrong, or that thing wrong, but the morality of the whole system is bad," was Mr. Laurie's summing up. His belief amounted almost to

a mania. When I intimated our shortness of our provisions, and on the ship's account wished to purchase a young steer, Mr. Laurie replied, "I would let any other ship but a labour vessel have some beef, but they shall never get anything from me." True, I thanked Mr. Laurie for his offer to give me—that is, the *Argus*—a couple of fowls for my own exclusive use, but I declined the gift on such terms. He had a very nice homestead, in a healthy spot where fever should be practically unknown; and the conclusion was forced on me that Mr. Laurie's present lines were cast in a much more pleasant place than the spot where that mysterious "business" was situated which he "gave up to help to spread the Gospel amongst the heathen." For twenty years Aneitium had been hailed by the missionaries as a Christian land; and Mr. Laurie and his colleague there might have made a start for a real heathen reserve at Tanna, forty miles off, or farther north at Api, Mallicolo, and Santo. I should like to give Mr. Laurie every credit for good intentions, but certainly he was a man of scant knowledge of the world. Here was I striving to obtain every light upon a most important question; and all I could get out of Mr. Laurie was vague abuse of the labour traffic.

The mission there appeared to own all the best land along the beach. Around the homestead there was space for flocks of goats, and fowls, and herds of pigs. The old mission station, where Mr. Inglis lived for twenty-five years, was on the beach, in the midst of a charming garden containing orange and lemon trees. The house itself had been partly pulled down to build Mr. Laurie's new bungalow. The church was a lined one, with squared logs of cocoa-palm acting as seats, but Mr. Laurie expressed his intention of having regular sittings erected. There was a pulpit, and pew for the missionary's family. The schoolroom had glazed windows—a novelty in the New Hebrides. Should I be there the following day? Mr. Laurie intended re-opening his school; had I been there the day before I might have assisted at a prayer meeting! That day I could get little information, and was knocked out of time by a tract! There were very few natives in the village of Aname, but Mr. Laurie calculated that in the surrounding district, comprising his parish, there was a population of 300. In the school-room I was shown a few printed books in the native language, and one or two copy-

books belonging to the prize scholars. I could not say much for the writing. The printing of all the books, as well as the erection of the churches, had been defrayed by sums raised through the sale of arrowroot made by the natives. I presumed, too, that they often gave contributions of money, which there the inhabitants well knew the value of. Mr. Laurie told me that he paid all his servants in money. Mrs. Laurie had trained three very nice girls for her household, who strangely expressed a wish to shake hands with me. They, unlike the vestals on the mission station at Tanna, would be apportioned to husbands —a prize, I suppose, held out for good conduct on the part of the young men.

Peter had not been able to obtain any recruits at Aname. There were several who wanted to go, but were afraid of the missionary. His influence, however, had not been strong enough to prevent some thirty natives leaving for Queensland within the previous two months. The only things we could obtain were cocoa-nuts. These were not so large as those at Tanna. Consequently it took 9,000 of them to make a ton of copra. The price, however, was reduced, six sticks of tobacco instead of ten for 100 nuts. After leaving the missionary's, we rowed along the coast inside the reef, through many fish-ponds and over many beautiful marine gardens. It ended in our having to wade ashore, greatly to the discomfort of my tender feet. There were no signs of life on the beach; the people were all away at their yam patches, or a *tabu* had been placed against their visiting the shore whilst a vessel was in sight. There must have been villages inside those cocoa-nut groves, and on the banks of the freshwater streams which we passed—one large enough, it seemed, for canoe navigation, and with a pile of driftwood and snags at its mouth, reminding me of the "burns" flowing into the New Zealand lakes. Peter and I struck into paths running from the beach. I found the first house, a mere shed of the usual type in these islands. The furniture consisted of some dirty mats and a few old bottles. The only things worth looting were four cocoa-nuts in an old basket. I annexed these, but left as payment a stick of tobacco. I wonder what the owner would think of the metamorphosis when he returned? I hope he would not be afraid to use the weed, as being the work of an evil *natmass*.

We trudged along paths through the woods, by yam patches and tracts of sugar-cane, past two or three more lone huts, but saw no people. We "cooeed," but without response. Peter began to opine that we had got "bushed." Where two paths met we separated. Ahead I heard the noise of wood-chopping and the crowing of fowls. The path led into an open space, shaded by a tall banyan-tree, in old times evidently the place where song and dance were held. By the side of this was a deep dry gully, the banks walled up with stones; in the rainy season I expected this was often a foaming torrent. Around the plaza there were two or three native houses, and one lime building which I took to be a church or school.

A man was sitting over a fire, on which taro was roasting. Three women assisted him in looking on. There were children running about and children in arms. The man was clad in a shirt, the women in long grass petticoats, as at Tanna. They looked startled at my appearance, but when Peter showed up on the other side the children cried, the women flew, and the man, clasping his lastborn to his bosom, looked as if he would like to follow their example. We tried him in the choicest *bêche-de-mer* English, but not a word would he understand—not a word would he say, except "missionary" and "tobacco." We pointed to fowls, taro, and cocoa-nuts, and intimated that we would buy them. The only answer was "missionary." He took a stick of tobacco, however, without compunction. Then three more like unto himself appeared upon the scene. The idiots could not or would not *sabe*. Peter's celebrated emigration lecture was wasted here. But I am wrong to blame the poor natives, rather than the spirit which has kept them, after thirty-five years of mission work, ignorant of the English language, and in a state which makes them discourteous and stupid.

I looked at the church, a neat building, far superior to anything further north, except at Erakor and Eratap, in Sandwich. The native huts, too, were of a better class than those on the other islands. A picturesque spot this, and if the people had been but as intelligent as those of Tanna, I could have passed a very pleasant time here. Perhaps, when the labour boys came back in three years' time, they would liven up. Of course, from one point of view, the natives had a perfect right to avoid us and to refuse to buy and sell with us; but that was not the

point of view I was looking from. I wanted fresh food; they had got it and would not sell. I tried to impress upon an old man that if he would bring cocoa-nuts and fowls to the boat he would be well paid. I took him to be chief or native teacher, and thought that he might have some spark of intelligence, but he only grinned idiotically. He, however, followed us as we struck across the gully, perhaps with the idea of seeing us safe "off the premises."

Through the bush by a broad trail, evidently trodden by many feet. This appeared to be a main road round the island, with many smaller paths diverging out of it. We met one or two men; they passed on the other side and would not hold converse. The old man who had followed turned back after a time, having satisfied himself, I presume, that we had stolen nought from his yam patches. There was a pleasant shade overhead, and if this had been my first walk in the tropics I should have enjoyed it. But one becomes accustomed to look on graceful feathery palms, broad banana leaves, swaying bamboo canes, and brilliant crotons, with as much indifference as on quickset hedges in England. I wanted to study human nature, not botany; and humanity here was of the stupidest kind. We passed through several villages, some deserted, the inhabitants absent at their yam plantations on the hill-sides; in others, the few men and women one saw merely grinned vacantly when spoken to. The outward evidences of Church rule were visible everywhere. White plaster chapels were to be met with in every collection of huts. The head man of each village, like Melchisedek, exercised spiritual as well as temporal sway. I was told by old traders that the change in this people was very marked.

Let me give the missionaries every credit. Here, on Aneitium, there can be no doubt that the people live more decently than of old. It is visible in their dress—scanty as it is to European eyes—in many of their homes, and in the striking fact that they carry no arms. I heard from Mr. Laurie that a labour vessel recently gave a Snider to the friends of some boys recruited for Queensland, a proceeding much to be deprecated. But there had been very many white families settled on Aneitium for many years, and where there are ladies and children, an example of decency is always set. This improvement, however,

is only comparative, and there are still very many low, dirty huts, and some are contented with but a rag round the loins. Still, granting all this outward gain, how is it that in spirit the people are changed for the worse? Is it the old story of the contact with civilisation and a civilised faith, which is pressing them down here, as it has done under the most favourable conditions amongst savage races in other parts of the world? It is said, "With the law came sin." The heathen Tannese are naked, and not ashamed; bloodthirsty cannibals, it may be, but often kind and courteous, speaking everywhere some scraps of English, and giving information intelligently. The Aneitiumese are clothed, but sulky, speaking no English, turning their backs on us, and walking away when we accost them. Granting that they are Christians, they are still savage boors. I think after thirty-five years of mission work, the natives might have been taught the language of the people who pay for the said work. It certainly would have been a great advantage to us, endeavouring, as we were, to purchase provisions. I should have liked also to question them on the subject of French annexation, and to ascertain if they had any ideas on that question.

At last we met with a boy who had been to Queensland. A strong-looking fellow; Peter tried to recruit him, and, failing that, to engage him for one of the boat's crew. His reply made me laugh. "Me no go boat's crew, me too much lazy." He meant to express that it was too hard work, but, I think, let out the real truth. He and his people are too lazy. Through his aid we managed to get a supply of cocoa-nuts, and he led us by the nearest track to the beach. We sent a swift-footed messenger to bring the boat, and, setting sail, coasted along to the other side of the mission station. The sun was getting low, but our hopes of business revived when, after rounding a point, we saw several "smokos" on the shore. Pulling towards these, however, we were disappointed. These well-known signals to labour vessels were only "plenty gammon." Women stood round the fires and beckoned us, but ran away when, after much trouble, we had managed to find passages through the surf. For two or three miles we were mocked in this manner, and our patience was getting sorely tried. Then a man came *ventre à terre* along the shore, waving his arms violently, and making signs to us to stop. Again we turned back, but when within twenty yards,

he ran off with an insolent gesture, laughing at the way we had been fooled. We fired a shot in the air to frighten him. Never deer sprang so quickly into the bush as did this *farçeur*. I expect his heart was in his mouth. I should not be at all surprised to find it reported that the boat's crew of the *Lizzie* fired without provocation on the natives of Aneitium, and there may be people who would blame us for scaring one of them in this manner; others, however, may agree with me that he richly deserved it. Such a practical joke, however, it would be dangerous to play at Tanna, or the other northern islands, where the natives are armed, and would take it *au sérieux*. Let it be on record that the rifle was placed in the boat merely to signal the ship at night.

On the other side of a deep gully there is a rocky headland, marked on the chart as "Ejepthaloa." A flagstaff erected on this showed that we were approaching civilised residences. Round the point we saw houses on shore. The passage through the reef was narrow, but large and deep enough for moderate-sized vessels to enter and anchor in smooth water inside. We landed at the roughest of stone jetties, formed of uneven rocks, covered with slime by the receding tide, and affording only treacherous foothold. Night had fallen when we reached the first house, belonging to Mr. Cronstedt, who had been settled there for twelve years, whaling, cotton-planting, and trading. Mr. Freeman, the other white settler, lived a few hundred yards along the beach, which formed a common playground for the children. Having eaten scarcely a mouthful since morning, Peter and myself revelled in the generous hospitality we met with at Mr. Cronstedt's. It was a long pull back to the *Lizzie*, which was still beating off and on, trying to get to an anchorage. It was after midnight when we got on board, and reported no recruits; but there was joy over the boat-load of fresh cocoa-nuts, and a pig, fowls, eggs, and dainty cakes, presented from our kind friends ashore. But what was more precious to me, was a file of late papers left by a labour vessel with Mr. Cronstedt, and far into the night I lay awake reading these, tired out though I was with this fair sample of a day's work recruiting. I could see that it was an occupation requiring a great deal of patience as well as physical endurance. I do not think I should make a first-class recruiter.

Messrs. Cronstedt and Freeman came on board in the morning, and the *Lizzie* was piloted to first-class anchorage in twelve fathoms of water round the point at Ejepthaloa. The "mud-hook" was dropped, and until the wind changed the *Lizzie* would remain there. A great many vessels, however, either went inside or anchored outside of the reef in the roadstead, known as "Cronstedt's anchorage," by which place the settlement is generally known in preference to the native name of Anauensee. Four days we stopped there, I, as the guest of Mr. Freeman, utilising my time in accompanying Peter in labour-catching expeditions, and in the pleasantest of communion with the most hospitable of hosts.

When you had walked one mile in Aneitium, when you had seen one native village, when you had interviewed one discourteous teacher, you had had a sample of all. The trip to the head mission station at Anelcahaut, however, presented distinct features. We started very early from down the east side of the island. There were some picturesque rocky islets, an abnormal amount of reef near the shore, and in one bight, a stretch of some two miles of splendid cocoa-nut groves. Canoes drawn up on the beach, and the number of fish ponds, showed that there were plenty of inhabitants there. It was a case of again wading to the land over sharp rocks. Then Peter and I tried the various paths we saw running into the bush. We found many houses untenanted, every one absent planting yams. Some of the huts were comparatively good, others not more advanced than what we saw elsewhere. But there was everywhere evidence of prosperity, want was unknown. The land in Aneitium eligible for cultivation is limited in area, but the inhabitants are yearly decreasing, and food increases faster than mouths. We saw good taro patches, well drained; fat pigs in sties and fowls, too, were plentiful. Two or three little burns, which then merely trickled across the sands, in the rainy season became torrents, as was evidenced by the driftwood on their banks.

There is a beautiful temperature in Aneitium during the winter and spring. Trudging along the sands on a day like this, there was nothing enervating in the atmosphere, as in the other islands. The jungle undergrowth was not so dense as elsewhere in the New Hebrides, which undoubtedly made the climate

healthier. The change from Vaté was pronounced, and I felt the blood tingling through my veins, instead of suffering from the sickly inertia which I had fought against for the previous months. But these deserted villages bored one. We "cooeed," but without effect. Peter was wroth, and stalked away along the beach, swearing that if the natives did not care to come down to the boats they might stick to the bush. I took the liberty of examining some of the huts. They did not steal from one another in Aneitium. The doors were only mats, and pushing these aside one found all the *lares* and *penates* of the inmates available for loot. Mats, more or less clean; baskets, sometimes containing clothes, sometimes books—the Testament, hymn book, and part of Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" translated into Aneitiumese. The latter volume contained a gorgeous coloured frontispiece. I amused myself by secreting tobacco in the baskets to pay "my footing" for intrusion. Outside the houses one saw fish traps of wickerwork, bags containing cocoa-nuts or taro, hung up to trees, and sometimes a *batta* for drying copra was visible. At intervals the white plaster walls of a church or a teacher's house were to be seen, but no inhabitants. I thought I had caught a teacher once, but, on seeing me, he just turned his back, and stalked into the bush with his nose in the air. It made me mad enough to go into his house and throw things about, but I did not wish to outrage the Christian community too much.

Peter had gone ahead, but his mark could be easily followed in the sand. I was getting tired, and went out on to the reef in the hope of finding some rare shell or spray of coral. One of the beautiful sea-snakes would also have been worth catching. But I only managed to stir up some large specimens of *béche de mer*. This is one of the articles of trade bought from the natives by Mr. Cronstedt. Aneitium was the only island where I had seen it, and, but that the natives are too lazy, I imagine that a considerable quantity might be collected. The trepang is not an enticing-looking object in its native element, but it served to recall to mind the glories of that dinner in the native town at Shanghai, when the Allen Brothers, of New York, a New South Wales M.L.A., and myself, ate this fish, if it is a fish, in all its forms. It is to a true epicure—one whose soul soars above plain roast and boiled—always delicious, and it is a striking proof of

the superiority of the Chinese that they discovered its succulent qualities, in spite of its forbidding exterior in a natural state. Then I mused on the wonderful industry of the Mongolians, and speculated as to what they would make of the New Hebrides were these islands delivered over to them. Send all the natives to tropical Australia, and people the group with Chinese, and the riches of the world would be vastly increased! Some people say, and I think with justice, that the Chinese are the coming race. In years hence all these fertile isles of the Pacific may be the homes of many thousands of almond-eyed, pigtailed Celestials, when the riches of the earth and the sea will be fully developed. I was aroused from this reverie by seeing that Peter had found and run down three boys, who came along the beach with him listening intently to the stereotyped praises of Queensland. Two, however, disappeared along a path when they saw me. The other, however, came along boldly. He was a nice boy, of about twenty years of age, and—*mirabile dictu!*—could speak a little English. His name was Outon, and being a chum of one Nangaree, a boy who was in Townsville, he had a curiosity regarding Queensland and the labour trade.

Somewhere along this beach lived Catipa, a native, who had been one of Peter's boat's crew on a previous voyage. We were anxious to find this man, as he might have "laid us on" to some recruits. Outon told us he was in the "calaboose" at Anelcahaut. We made sail for that place at once, the boy accompanying us, to have the honour of introducing the white men to the chief, Lathella. Outon, I found, had served a short time with one of the missionaries, and also with Messrs. Cronstedt and Freeman. He had derived his knowledge of English from the latter. I should imagine he was a Church member. He said he possessed four books, and he protested that he never smoked. From other conversation I had with him I thought that he was altogether too good a young man to be genuine.

The low island of Inyung helps to form the harbour of Anelcahaut. On this one saw houses now deserted, but for many years occupied as a whaling station by Mr. Underwood. As we rounded the reef and the little bay opened out, it struck me as one of the most beautiful spots I had seen in the New Hebrides. A foreground of vegetation, not too dense, groves of cocoa-nuts, cleared spaces around white houses, a valley running up into the

mountains, which formed a setting in the background, with magnificent effects of *chiaroscuro*—it was as attractive a picture as one would meet anywhere. The long low building, which was the most prominent feature, was the church. The mission station, a collection of pretty bungalows, was in the midst of a grove of palms and bananas surrounding a garden rich in tropical plants. To the right there was a white house on the beach, belonging—Outon told me—to the chief, Lathella, but which, I believe, was built and occupied for some years by Captain Fraser, the ex-blockade-runner, and first captain of the *Dayspring*.

We landed near this, and were met by a smart-looking native, with his hair white with *lasi*, who informed us, per Outon, that Lathella, the chief, was at his house on the other side of the bay. There he kept his wife and family, this lime-walled building being a sort of Government residence, a show place for strangers. Outon drew my attention to a man on the shore who was walking along in irons. This was a great evidence of civilisation. I endeavoured to find out what offence he had committed, and for what offences Lathella the Great inflicted imprisonment in the calaboose. The man ironed was sentenced to "three yams'" (*i.e.*, three years) hard labour for the death of a young girl after outraging her. The irons did not seem a great punishment to this man. He grinned and laughed without any appearance of shame; he was stout and in good condition, and his hard labour was very light, consisting in merely plaiting sinnet from cocoa-nut fibre, which became the property of the chief. Three other prisoners, I was told, were working in Lathella's yam patches. Theirs had been offences against the moral code. I wonder if he had solved the difficult problem which has puzzled so many—how to make convict labour profitable: I dare say he could have given some hints to our colonial inspectors of penal establishments. The gaoler appeared to have nothing to do but to watch this one man, and he, with a view to tobacco, gladly showed me over the premises without any official orders from the heads of the Church and the State.

The convict establishment at Anelcahaut was primitive. The stockade enclosed a small place where the manufacture of sinnet went on. Two whipping-posts were the principal orna-

ments. The gaoler showed me with glee how offenders were spreadeagled when he applied the lash. I suppose he would have been executioner also if capital punishment had not apparently been abolished. The calaboose itself was the ordinary style of native house, a roof without walls, but inside it was lined with strong posts, and the kennels which did duty as cells were built of strong boards. Half the length of the calaboose was for the accommodation of the gaoler. The other half was divided into three compartments, with low doors, and bars and locks outside. In the centre kennel the general criminals slept. There were two solitary cells on each side—one for the murderer, the other lately occupied by a woman. These were so narrow that the occupants had to creep in like snakes. Three years in irons and residence in such a place was not a pleasant sentence; but a native, if he has little to do, is always happy, and I did not think the gaoler looked one to trouble himself particularly about early hours. Irons, whipping-posts, and cells—these, indeed, showed an advance from the primal punishments of club and fire, and cannibal orgies on the part of the victors, which the missionary accounts tell us were practised at Aneitium in days gone by. The gaoler gavè me a few yards of sinnet as a souvenir of my visit to his establishment, of which he seemed very proud. A good-natured varlet this, who laughed at his prisoner, laughed over the gravestone of Lathella's eldest born—the Crown Prince of Aneitium—and laughed most of all when he got his *cumshaw* of tobacco.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### TAMED CANNIBALS.

For a couple of sticks of tobacco the gaoler at Anelcahaut climbed up the palms, and threw down twenty cocoa-nuts as refreshment for our crew. Then he accompanied the boat, which was to row across the bay, whilst I walked around and inspected the church. I did not call on the missionary, the Rev. Joseph Annand, of Nova Scotia, who came here in 1876, having "abandoned the field" at Port Vila, where he had been settled for three years on the historical island of Iririki. I heard good reports of Mr. Annand, as being courteous to his own race, and I believe I should have had a hearty welcome if I had called. I have no doubt I should have obtained a lot of "official" information from him; but was not that all written down in missionary reports and the many laudatory works produced by their admirers? Mr. Annand could tell me very little more than I already knew, and, if I attempted to see Lathella in his presence, I should be humbugged. These natives show one face to their white pastor, and another to any white layman they may be friendly with. I have come to the conclusion that a missionary is the very last person one should have as a cicerone in attempting to obtain trustworthy information from natives. Does Mrs. Hodge, in Mudshire, tell you her inner thoughts when you call round with the rector? And does the average missionary in the New Hebrides really understand the wants, wishes, and desires of his parishioners any better than the average English country incumbent, who often leaves all the hard work to be done by his curates, even as the missionaries here leave the work to be done by native teachers?

I must congratulate Mr. Annand, however, on the pleasant place to which he had been "called" from dreary Nova Scotia. The mission-house was of stone-work, with verandahs and grass roof, but there were many other cottages and buildings inside the compound. But as the yearly synod was held

there, when the missionaries from all the other isles assembled, and discussed questions of Church discipline and the progress of "the work," considerable guest accommodation was required. The schoolhouse, which, I was told, contained a set of globes, maps, and a magic-lantern, was also inside the missionary reserve. Here also there was a printing press, where Dr. Geddie, the founder of the mission, produced the first sheets of the Bible in the Aneitiumese language. Passing between the mission residence and a boat and storehouse on the beach, I entered the churchyard. There was a bell in front under a thatched pent. This long building of whitewashed plastered stone had the grass roof extended to form a low verandah, which detracted from its appearance. It had been erected for nearly thirty years. Dr. Geddie, the ambitious founder of the mission and of this church, must have been a man of great powers of organisation to get the natives to work under his superintendence. The stone was obtained from near the shore, but the great beams were brought from miles inland—no slight task. Dr. Geddie must have acquired great influence over the people to bring about this, and also to persuade them to make arrowroot to meet the cost of printing the Testament and other expenses. This church will long remain a monument to the energy of the father of the mission; but, otherwise, it is a useless work. It must, even at the time the foundation stone was laid, have been far too large for the requirements of the district; and now it would hold all the population of the island if they could be brought together.

There were three doors in the front. Pushing open one of these, I found that the reverend architect early discovered that he was making a mistake, for a wall was erected inside, cutting off about a third of the space. This would have been useful to turn into a school-room, but it was only occupied by some stores. Opening a door, I found that the second part was again divided by an enormous mat, stretching from the giant beams to the floor. The labour in plaiting this mat must have been very great, and as the thatched roof periodically required renewal, it will be seen that the faithful here were kept well in hand to answer all these calls upon their time and energies. The second division of the church which I entered was only occupied by some empty cases. One could not help thinking that this building was a white

elephant, when only one-third of it was in use. Pushing aside the mat or screen, I found myself in the part where service is now held, and this seemed far too large for any congregation likely to be gathered together at Aneitium. It contained nine windows with large glass panes, many broken. Through these one obtained peeps of glorious scenery of sea and land, and I reckoned the thoughts of the Sunday-school children were often considerably distracted. The floor was matted. There were six forms in front of the platform where the minister read and preached, and benches around the walls. In the corner there was a square-cushioned pew like the "squire's" in an English village church. This was for the missionary's family.

The only bit of colour was in the red cushions on the seats of the bench at the back of the reading-desk. Above this was the one record which the church contained, a wooden tablet perpetuating, in the Aneitiumese language, the virtues of "Ion Getti." Translated, it set forth that he laboured there for twenty-four years. "When he landed at Aneitium, in 1848, there were no Christians; when he left, in 1872, there were no heathen." A noble tribute this, to which the 600 communicants, fifty schools, twenty elders, and sixteen deacons, on this island, bear witness. Dr. Geddie lies in Geelong cemetery, after a career in which he endured many hardships, and fought (according to his lights) the good fight manfully. He made the way easy for those who came after him. But how I wish the quality of the Christians he left behind were of a superior class, and that they had some of the amiable qualities which the heathen possess, and which might not detract from Christian grace, while making its owners more interesting companions. Dr. Geddie fought the good fight, but when I look at this empty building, of which only one-third is even prepared for its intended use, I think, *cui bono?* I think of the heathen in Tanna, but forty miles off, and of the thousands in the isles further north, and reflecting on the folly of erecting such a useless edifice as this, I am reminded of Mark Twain's advice to the Italians, "Sell your churches and feed your beggars."

Dr. Geddie had especial advantages in settling on Aneitium. The greatest chief was Nohoat, who lived at Anelcahaut, and who, in the words of one record, "Finding that the residence of the missionary increased his importance, afterwards extended to

him a very effectual protection." Like Thakambau and Lancelot, after enjoying a hot youth and manhood, at sixty years of age he got religion, and died a holy man. The State aided the Church here, as it has done so often in mission fields, and the Church has repaid the State by increasing its powers. Nohoat's heir in 1859 was "the chief Lathella, a young Christian of good character, and who has for years been an elder in the church and an exemplary Christian." Lathella, twenty-four years after his father's death, seemed to have power over most of Aneitium. He was reported to be a man of intelligence, speaking English well, who had been in Melbourne, possessed a bank account in the colonies, and on his native heath was indeed a great chief, as was shown by those outward and visible signs of authority, calaboose, irons, and whipping post. I expected to see one like Maafu and Thakambau, a king amongst men, clearly superior to his fellows, and was rather astonished to find that the old native talking to Peter on the beach was Lathella. He was clad only in a shirt and *sulu*, none of the cleanest, the hatchet in his hand showed he had been working, and the two boys with him, to whom he was presumably father, were just like any ordinary native lads. Lathella had rather a nice expression; he did not look as if he would make *ki-ki* of you, and he could speak English, which was a very great deal in his favour.

The two lads had been taught a knowledge of Good and Evil. They fled from me as representing the latter quality, and I had great difficulty in making friends to the extent of running races with them on the beach. Then I danced breakdowns on the sand, and shouted "*Kaloo kala*" just to amuse the children and myself, and to impress old Lathella with the idea that I was a harmless idiot. I should have liked to have drawn the missionary also, but he did not condescend to take notice of men whose red-painted boat proclaimed that they belonged to a Queensland "slaver." A native, however, came running down from the house with a message, which I concluded was, "Keep an eye on those ruffians, and see them safe off." Whilst I romped with the boys, the old man smiling at me, and the gaoler, who also appeared to be prime minister, laughing as only a nigger thoroughly tickled can laugh, Peter talked with the chief, playing his own little game. The culprit Catipa was a favourite of Peter's. He would like either to ship him in the

boat's crew, or recruit him as a labourer. Catipa was in for three months' hard labour, for conniving at the escape of a man and woman—another's wife—by the last Queensland vessel. Peter delicately put it that if a fine were paid, and Catipa allowed to depart in our boat, justice would be satisfied. I made a sporting offer of the whole trade box for the lot of four prisoners, arguing that as they were all bad characters, the place would be well rid of them. Lathella declined the deal. I imagine there was a power behind the throne—a power which had its quarters in that pleasant bungalow near the church.

We lay down on the beach, near a broad path leading through the bush to Lathella's private house. He told us to stop here, and though I should very much have liked to see his home, still one must respect the *convenances* when dealing with a great chief. Shortly the convicts were brought up, Catipa and two others, one of whom was a sailor on the *Dayspring*, and claimed acquaintance with me from meeting at Ambrym. His crime was wife desertion and attempted homicide. Another one was "up" for slander, or bearing false witness. Whilst Peter talked to Catipa, I interviewed Lathella. He said that when any offences were committed the head men of the village brought the culprits up before him. He was the judge, and gave what sentences he liked. People were flogged for theft and minor offences. The man in irons was a very bad man. "Why not hang him then, or send him to Queensland?" No reply. "How do you know what punishment to give a man? Have you got any rule—so much for murder, so much for theft, so much for running off with a man's wife?" Lathella answered, "I punish as I like." I thought of the power behind the throne. I asked about the church and school. Lathella said, "Quite one hundred, more than one hundred go to church every Sunday. To school there are twelve children. They go in the early morning." "Does Mr. Annand teach them?" "No; Aneitium man." I produced my note-book, and suddenly Lathella shut up, and to my questions said, "I do not understand much English." I told him in Welsh that he was an old humbug, to which he replied, "You ask Mr. Annand."

There was a yellow girl nursing a child. "My daughter, Asoniki," said Lathella. I acknowledged the introduction without wondering that the child was lighter than the mother;

half-castes were so plentiful. I asked, however, after the husband, and was told the baby belonged to Lathella. It was the Benjamin of his old age. The second Mrs. Lathella came down the path, and took her offspring. She was white—white enough, at least, to pass in Spain, or in a gipsy encampment, or in many of the manufacturing districts of England. Now, I strongly object to this form of miscegenation, which, after the American war, was suggested by some of the advanced spirits of Boston as a solution of the free nigger business: white and black would absorb each other. But I believe in maintaining the purity of race. Edmond About, in "The Fellah," shows how miscegenation may result happily, and in a late missionary book, "Percy Pomo," a Solomon Island lad, educated at Norfolk Island, winds up by marrying an English lady. I suspect Bishop Selwyn is the author of this wonderful work. It may be a prejudice, but I do not like going back to the inferior origin; so this came on me with as great a shock as the sight of that lovely girl sacrificed in the mission of St. Louis in New Caledonia.

This marriage of May and December—this union of octoroon and black—must have been arranged for reasons of state, and not for the same reasons as in the Catholic institution; for Mrs. Lathella's child, as it should be, was darker than herself. I could not find out the truth. Lathella was joined by Peter and Catipa, and the husband's back being turned, I patted the baby, and talked to the mother. Her straight hair was cut short, but in this, as in every feature, there was not a trace of Melanesian type. She was clad only in a grass skirt and calico body. She had some paltry rings on her fingers. To these I added a new brass and glass one, value ninepence, from the trade box. The black eyes looked at me as if they would willingly have flirted.

"What made you marry such an old man as that?" I asked. Instead of indignation, there was a mournful look.

"Did you want to marry him?"

"No!"

"Did you want to marry any one else, any young man?"

"Yes," with tears in the eyes.

"Why did you marry Lathella?"

"Missionary make me."

"Do you like to stop with him?"

"No."

"Would you like to go to Queensland in my ship?"

"Yes."

Miss Lathella, who was older than her mother-in-law, now came up, and I had to pat the baby again. I fancy Miss L. kept a sharp look-out on her mamma.

My only excuse for such prying investigations into Mrs. Lathella's affairs was the desire of correct information as to the power which the missionaries in Aneitium were said to possess, and the elucidation of the fact that, under the new dispensation, women appeared to have as little their own way as of old. They are Christians; yes! War is a thing of the past; infanticides and living sacrifices are abolished; yet they are not much more honest or virtuous. And as they sin now knowingly, they are in so much the worse case than in older days, when evil was their good. If Mrs. Lathella goes wrong, if she bolts in a labour ship, it is because she has been sacrificed against her will. This was my reflection, which, however, might have been totally unjustifiable, for I was afterwards informed that Mrs. Lathella hardly knew a word of English, and could not properly understand my questions. But, on the other hand, I had independent testimony that this had been a forced marriage.

Thinking that Aneitium would not be a bad place to start a revolution, and proclaim a republic with a free flag of one's own, I followed Peter to the boat. He hadn't been able to effect a trade for Catipa, and we rowed away, Mrs. L. waving adieux from behind a tree out of her lord's ken. I should be sorry if she really thought I had any intention of kidnapping her. "Row in shore round the point," said Peter. I looked at him. "I might get a recruit here," said he. "Some one I never saw before; no one, of course, who was on the shore; no one you spoke to. A man from the bush, of course." "By ——," says Peter, "you sabe! I should like to have you with me as Government Agent. But, look here, what can I do? If a man comes on board here, swims off perhaps, says he wants to go to Queensland; am I to go ashore and ask who he is, or take him back for his chief to punish? I want to ask you what you would do in this case. A woman is brought down to your boat, tied hand and foot. She has done something wrong, and if you don't take her, they will kill and eat her. She don't know

where she is going to. You can't say she is exactly a willing recruit, but what would you do then?" "Take her, of course. When did this happen to you, Peter?" "I didn't say it happened to me at all; but, look at that man on the shore." Not only was one man running along the sands, keeping pace with us, but another was following him as a reserve guard. Cunning old Lathella! I wonder if he distrusted Peter or myself most. Catipa must make a bold dash for freedom to escape the gaoler and his assistant. Was it fancy, or did I really see a dark face peering through the bushes, which vanished as the gaoler approached? Anyhow, although we went on quietly, Catipa did not show up, and we set sail at last, Peter expressing his disgust at everything connected with Aneitium.

"Why don't you recruit him?" I asked, pointing to Outon, who was still with us in the boat. "Oh, he won't come; I tried him," was the reply. *Pour m'amuser,* I commenced the usual address, "Very good you go along a Melbourne along a me. Very good *ki-ki.* Pay very good. Pay money. Plenty shops. You buy what you like. You good fellow, I good fellow master." But Outon spurned my advances. He would have nought to do with me, and gave an emphatic "No" to everything I said. "I go ashore," said he, and once he feinted as if he would jump overboard. "You foolish fellow, master no take you suppose you no like; me put you ashore at place belong a you," said Peter, and then he, out of emulation, tried his hand. The happy plantation life, the £18 clear at the end of "three yams," the easy existence on board ship, where he would have good *ki-ki* and excellent society, including that of "plenty Mary belong a Malo." Malo, be it noted, is the very Paphos of the Hebrides, and its women are renowned amongst the other islands for their beauty and amiability. Outon hesitated, and asked, "You go place Nangaree stop?" "Yes. I take you place where I leave Nangaree." In the letter this was true, but in the spirit it might not be carried out, as the two boys would be always many miles apart on different plantations. Peter blarneyed away, soothing the boy, who would not assent as yet, but gave no denial. He would not touch anything from the trade-box, however; he knew that accepting "hansel" was like the recruiting sergeant's shilling—it bound him. We passed the place where Outon met us; he looked at the shore; there

was a struggle in his mind. Then "Jack," our stroke oar, said, "You no be frightened; Peeta good fellow man; he no fight, no swear at you; you get plenty *ki-ki*, good fellow ship. Plenty boy belong a Vaté on board. All missionary boy. I missionary man. You stop along a them you all right." "Ship he go Townsville?" asked Outon, who appeared to have been dubious as to our destination. "Ship he go Townsville. Good fellow captain; good fellow Government." "You go along a me to Melbourne?" I asked. A decisive "No!" was the reply. "You go along a me to Townsville?" asked Peter. A nod, and then a "Yes," and the boy was fairly recruited. I expected the arguments of our native boatman clinched the matter. Missionaries, I suppose, would call him a decoy. But there was nothing but argument used; he was neither coerced nor bribed, not a stick of tobacco even being given. I only hope that he would meet his friend Nangaree in Queensland. Outon was instructed that when he went on board "Government" would ask him if he wanted to go to Queensland, and he would say "Yes." This, I suppose, was the usual caution given by recruiters; but Outon plainly knew his own mind, and could express himself in English. And so our only recruit in Aneitium was caught,—a stray bird secured by chance, greatly to Peter's astonishment; but as he said, "You can never tell. Sometimes you may talk to them for hours, and you think you have got them, and they will back out. Sometimes they will change their minds all of a sudden, and come just like this fellow."

Recruiting is hard work—out all day, and often far into the night, with little to eat or drink, subsisting for hours on a cocoa-nut—still, I enjoyed the time I was with Peter. There was nothing more charming than to lie back in the stern sheets when, with a fair wind, the boat went rushing through the water, and to watch the white line of surf breaking on the shore. Overhead the moon lit up a cloudless sky. And so I lay idly and listened to Peter's yarns, generally giving him a lead to matters respecting the islands and the labour trade. But on shore I was spoilt. The householders Freeman and Cronstedt vied with each other in hospitality. We were generally the guests of the community. If I had not been stopping at one place, I would have liked to have been at the other. It was a

case of "how happy could I be with either." The pale little islanders were of course my friends; May and Lily, and a Rose also, were here. I was astonished to find such comfortable homes on this island, far superior to what one would find in the Australian bush, where well-filled bookshelves and plunge and shower baths are a rarity. The gardens, too, with their wealth of roses and geraniums and jessamine, as well as tropical flowers and rare crotons, showed the presence of careful, cultivated tastes. The ladies, too, had wonderful collections of sheils and island curiosities; and taxidermy, as well as conchology, was practised. I credit the female influence with all this refinement. That influence was English, although Messrs. Cronstedt and Freeman were respectively Swedish and German by birth. But they had both been a long time in these seas. The latter for some years had a labour vessel out of Noumea, and I was enabled to get some new lights from him. Now copra trading was the stand-by, although *bêche de mer* and fungus were also bought from the natives. Any passing vessels could obtain gear and stores, and fresh food in the shape of pigs, goats, fowls, and pigeons in abundance. Both the establishments on the beach had regular farmyards. With a good anchorage, this should be a rendezvous for Queensland labour vessels, as everything is cheaper there than in Havannah Harbour; besides, Englishmen—and Messrs. Cronstedt and Freeman may now be counted as such—deserve supporting more than the French New Hebrides Company.

Whaling was a great industry there in the past; the evidence remained in the gigantic jawbones forming the portal of Mr. Cronstedt's garden. Even now some forty men were employed in the season. These Aneitium natives had been trained by previous American and Norfolk Island whalers, engaged by Mr. Cronstedt. They were not first-class, but, prey being scarce, he could not now get better labour. The men were paid by the "lay." Three boats would be out at a time. No new-fangled bombs were used here, but the old-fashioned harpoon. The animal was afterwards killed with steel lances, which, made fast by cords to the boat, were drawn out when leviathan in his agony dived again. Then, towed alongside the stony pier, the carcase was drawn up by the derrick fixed there. The blubber was then cut up into strips, and carried on men's backs into the boiling-down

shed, and first placed in what is known as the "blubber-room"—a big wooden vat. Then it was cut into small pieces, and these thrown into the two large "try-pots," or boilers, where they simmered and steamed till the oil floated on the top, when, more blubber being put in, it ran down a spout into barrels or tanks, and was ready for shipment to Noumea. There the price was £26 a ton. The yield varied from one and a half tons to seven tons of oil per whale, but the latter would be considered a large fish. The average might be taken at four and a half tons. The Greenland whales, I am told, average seventeen tons. The natives here carry away whale meat for food after the blubber is cut off. In this season of plenty they would make fires on the beach, and danced and sang as at Harvest Home. The missionaries objected to this as perpetuating heathen customs, but Mr. Cronstedt said he saw no harm in it. "They can't be alwath a-workin'," said Mr. Sleary, "and they can't be alwath a-prayin'." This year, however, there had been scant rejoicing; only one small whale had been taken. Mr. Cronstedt had not made his expenses. The men were all paid in cash, and they could realise a very nice little sum in a good year. The natives liked the work, which was the only thing in the shape of exciting sport which entered into their lives. One of the standing grievances at Aneitium was that the men, having received their dollars, did not lay them out again with Messrs. Cronstedt and Freeman. Part of the amount went in tithes to the church, and the remainder, I was informed, was often invested for tobacco and calico elsewhere. The two white traders on Aneitium complained that the competition that they were subject to was neither just nor equitable.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### LIFE ON BOARD A "LABOUR VESSEL."

My trip in the labour vessel *Lizzie* lasted thirty-four days. From Havannah Harbour to Aneitium we wandered about the face of the waters for twelve days. From the latter place to Townsville we had a fair passage of eighteen days. The voyage from the New Hebrides really commenced there. I have described the glorious time I had at Aneitium. Only one thing marred my happiness—the "flea season" was on. Fleas jumped at you from the sands by the sea and off the leaves in the bush. It was horrible to strangers. I never saw anything like it except at Emerald Downs in Queensland, where they were settled in thousands, and jumped out of the stones when one camped. A flea is neither rich nor rare. The wonder was how it came in these out-of-the-way places.

The last night on shore was a jolly one. We discussed, *inter alia*, the labour trade in all its phases. Next day boats conveyed myself and the Freeman household, and the Cronstedts, and our skipper's family, on board. As the boats were unloaded I began to think of Hans Breitmann, who, "wherever he went left nothing behind," there was such a quantity of presents from our kind friends ashore. Then the *Lizzie* weighed anchor. Hand-shaking and good-bye to all. Led by our Government Agent, over 120 recruits raised a series of shouts and yells which would have scared Bedlam. The boat passengers gave three cheers in response, and we were off, with a fair wind, to Queensland, every one better for the four days' sojourn at Aneitium.

Our emigrants were ninety-eight males and twenty-two females. They were from many different isles of the New Hebrides: Mallicolo, Aoba, Malo, Pentecost, Ambrym, Mai, Vaté, and Aneitium. One gets to distinguish these after a sojourn in the group by the various modes of hair-dressing, or the manner of undress, and in the case of the Pentecost boys, by their slit nostrils. Some few had shirts, but the majority of the

men were as nude as on their native sands. The women had just a calico *sulu*. The Queensland Act says that immediately the recruits come on board they shall be supplied with clothing, the males with pants and shirts, the females with petticoats and gowns. But I think I can safely say that this is never carried out on any vessel. The natives do not want them, as so few are accustomed to wear clothes. If given to them when they were recruited, many would require several changes before being landed at Townsville. It is a great saving to the owners, and makes the recruits turn out spick and span, when the garments are only distributed the day before landing. One would imagine, too, that it would be a gain to the employers of labour to receive nice newly-dressed "hands." But the clothing supplied is of the shoddiest description. It must be made expressly for this trade, serviceable only as "properties," for the day on which the farce of inspection is played, but not of the slightest use for "a long run." In Fiji they landed the natives without any pretence at clothes. They were here as they lived in their own homes; but it would have added to my comfort if these men had worn pants and shirts. I was tired of seeing so much of my black brother. Besides, it would have been a lesson in decency—that is, in our idea of decency, for they were perfectly proper after their own style. If clothes were not given them when recruited, they duly received a blanket each, and were warm enough at night.

The men and boys altogether were "a fine lot." The proportion of youngsters was large. There were many from twelve up to sixteen, the minimum age at which, according to the Act, boys could be recruited. But exception was made if young boys accompanied elder brothers. This left open an easy road for evasion, duly taken advantage of by all vessels. Juveniles bought from their parents could readily be registered as brothers of some young man recruited from the same village. No Government Agent could stop this, as the recruiter could make his terms and arrangements before the boys entered the boat. It cannot be supposed that the Government Agent could dog the steps of the recruiter, and listen to all his dealings. The boys, be it understood, came willingly enough. They were "bought" merely after the manner of their country, the "trade" of Sniders, ammunition, calico, tobacco, and pipes

being a solatium for the father's wounded feelings, or as part payment for their services during the "three yams" the sons are away. Fiji vessels were allowed to recruit young boys, and I do not see any objection to it, but I quote this as one of the many instances in which the Queensland Act is evaded. The youngsters we had on board were all nice smart lads, strong, sturdy, and at an adaptable age. I trusted, however, that they would not be placed to work in the cane fields. Hard, continuous labour would very possibly break them down. I could imagine how handy many of them would be about a house, but then the Act again says, Polynesians shall only be employed in "tropical agriculture," and not as domestic servants. As to whether that is just, or whether it is well carried out, is an affair of Queenslanders themselves. I got to like some of these lads, and they soon knew me. Their instincts, keener by far than ours, told them that I was a friend. When they came on deck of a morning they would shake hands, and I taught them to say, "Good morning, sir." There was "Georga Makalouda," so named from having been with Captain Macleod in his youth. There was little George, from Ambrym, aged twelve, the merriest little varlet on board, whose ivory teeth ever had a smile in them. "Billy," our waiter, was a few years older. He was going out into the world for the second time, having been three years in Samoa, and acquainted with "Capitane Prockit," as they called Captain Proctor. Billy appreciated the *cumshaw* of tobacco he got from me. I hoped all these lads would be well treated in Queensland. It seemed a great pity that they should ever go back to become, perhaps, man-slayers and cannibals.

The women folk were mostly young and passable; some had been mothers, all were married, although some only to the extent of owning a half or a third of a husband. One man brought on board three wives, others two. How this would be arranged when they got to Queensland I could not say. The Government Agent only allowed that a recruit, like a bishop, should have one wife. The others might be classed as single women; but as there had been a good deal of marrying and giving in marriage since we had started, trading off wives in native fashion, I reckoned that at Townsville all the twenty-two would be mated. Thus "Joe," from a village on Protection

Island, off Havannah Harbour, had previously been one of the boat's crew of the *Lizzie*, engaged at £3 a month. He would have been duly paid off; but, taking a fancy to a young enchantress from Malo, Joe recruited himself, and, as man and wife, they were booked for three years in Queensland. It is not every one would do so much for love; and, should Mrs. Joe repudiate the contract at Townsville, it would be rough on him. It struck me that a few Malo girls on board a labour ship were good decoys.

The morality of this vessel was not of our standard; but labour vessels did not pretend to be equal to missionary ships. They took the natives as they found them. If polygamy for a time was allowed on board, was not polyandry sanctioned amongst the Indian coolies in Fiji by the late Governor, Sir Arthur Gordon? The immorality at the Crown coolie camp which I saw at Suva, was as bad as anything we could find in the islands. As it was, on the *Lizzie* the natives simply had their liberty allowed them. Their movements were no more controlled than those of saloon passengers on mail steamers. This liberty, however, which it was pleasing to see as a refutation of all the brutalities alleged against the trade, might degenerate into licence. Many of these men would be great brutes to their wives if permitted, although perhaps Bishop Selwyn would tell me they were not worse than Black Country colliers. They would take off their straps and beat the women soundly. "Wallo," Mrs. Charlie number one, had a jealous mate, who thrashed her unmercifully. She had two black eyes and her nose broken as bad as an English pugilist's; the poor woman in shame kept her face covered with a handkerchief for a week. Her husband was well punished for his brutality, although Wallo, like wives in English police courts, said that he did not strike her. The touch of nature was there.

The women would not take to dress readily. Of the yards of calico supplied to them they made scant *sulus*, but they had not got into the habit of draping their busts. They preferred to deck themselves with strings of beads, part of their "hansel" money. The men adorned themselves in like fashion. These beads the women also made into armlets of cunning patterns, about the only thing in the way of useful or ornamental work which I saw them attempt. As a rule they preferred to lie around, perhaps

talking scandal, perhaps comparing husbands and lovers. They had a game of "cat's cradle," in which both men and women were very expert. With a piece of sinnet they made most wonderful combinations, far exceeding anything a white child would dream of. Whence did they get this game—the commonest in Europe? Was it indigenous, or was it imported by returned labourers, who learnt it from white children in Queensland?

One gets in our state of civilisation to look on men and women as mere bundles of clothes, which is the reason perhaps that a ballet or a circus is always a good "draw"—to see something of men and women as nature made them being a novelty to the multitude. A traveller in the Pacific, however, soon becomes accustomed to look on nude women as on a picture or a statue. There are not such prurient suggestions in these brown figures, naked and not ashamed, as in a crowded ballroom amongst the full undress of modern society. So I found it; and I do not claim to be of those to whom all things are pure. My idea has always been that artists should live for a time in the Pacific Islands. The Greeks became great sculptors because they were daily accustomed to see the human form divine in the physical contests of youth and manhood, unfettered by clothing. To them a man was something more than a *toga*. Nowadays artists get models, but in many cases they are not much better than lay figures. The eye of an artist should be trained to see the human body and human muscles in action, and then he would be really able to paint the nude. What magnificent specimens of Samoan, Tongan, and Fijian natives I have seen dancing as nature made them, in pure gaiety of life, who might have stood, with a slight alteration of type, as models for Cleopatra! When I have returned to civilisation I have always wondered at seeing all the women with clothes on, just as in the old days the Southerner, going to a Northern State, would be astonished at seeing that the majority of the inhabitants were white. A painter would have obtained some good studies on board the *Lizzie*, but the majority of the natives were not by any means naturally graceful in their attitudes. There was no beauty in the way they lay about on deck—in the manner in which they sat, with one knee propped up under the chin, perhaps scratching themselves with the toe of the other foot. They ate their meals, too, like apes. There is no mistaking

the fact that the wild, untamed child of nature is everywhere, from our standpoint, a dirty beast. And as these female recruits often reminded me so much of apes, I wished they would wear clothes.

There was only one advantage in the present condition of womanhood on board, which was to display the tattooing with which many were adorned. One Oaba woman had a light blue pattern traced over her throat and bust like a scarf. This had been done with a shark's tooth when she was a young child. Others had their skins blistered up into the similitude of flowers and ferns, cameos in living flesh, really pretty. Others, again, were ornamented with fish and lizards. To bring these to perfection must be a very difficult task, and very painful to the one about to be made beautiful for ever. The skin is cut, and earth and hot ashes placed inside, when the flesh grows over into the forms into which the artist dresses the sores. Certainly, after suffering so much, these women must have felt mad at having to cover their beauties to please our squeamish tastes.

If artificial sores alone had been prevalent in the islands! Unfortunately it was otherwise, and we had a proportion of the natives with blains and boils, and attacks of the loathsome skin diseases prevalent in the New Hebrides. Slight wounds fester readily in these latitudes. Going through the woods, you may scratch your foot or shin, and in a day or two will have a bad sore. The coral rock, too, appears to have the same effect. Whether, as is stated, there is poison in the vegetation, or whether the cause is climatic, I cannot say; but I would advise all travellers always to wear socks, so as to avoid scratches, and when the skin is broken, to be careful to keep it covered with some liniment until healed. Noxious flies propagate these skin diseases, and without care the slightest break in the cuticle may become very annoying. I have suffered, and so give the earnest advice, "Do not go barefooted on shore!" On some islands the natives were so diseased, that they flocked to the labour vessels to recruit with the idea of getting healed. And our Government Agent and surgeon in ordinary had cured many since they had come on board, although others were worse; but in dressing their sores he had poisoned his own hand, and had a dangerous wound. The life of a "G.A." on a labour ship is not altogether a happy one. He runs the risk of fever, of bullet, and arrow on shore; on board,

if he does his duty, he may be infected by disease; and when he returns to Queensland may find that his political friends are "out," and his services are dispensed with. His kicks are not counterbalanced by the halfpence he receives.

The *Lizzie* had no idea of going to windward, and unless the breeze was in her favour, behaved in a manner calculated to try the temper of the captain and the patience of the passenger. Thus she was very unfit for the island trade, where continual "beating" and "standing on and off" are necessary. It required a good seaman to manage the *Lizzie*. It doesn't pay to lose ships in this trade as on the coast of China. Vessels can only be insured for two-thirds of their value, and that only on payment of eighteen per cent. and an additional two and a-half per cent. during the four "hurricane" months. If you have a life assurance policy, an extra premium of thirty shillings per cent. is charged for travelling in the islands. But the profits in the labour trade are sufficient with moderate luck to clear any ship in two voyages. Thus, we carried a freight worth £2,400, which left a handsome margin of profit after paying the expenses of a five months' trip. Any other vessel but this could have done it in four months.

The cabin bore evidence of our character. A rack held eight Sniders, above which eight revolvers were hung. These were the arms of the two boats' crews whilst recruiting, useful both for defence and defiance, and certainly needed in many places where labour vessels went. Half-a-dozen pairs of handcuffs completed the warlike equipment. The captain possessed a Winchester sixteen shooter, and the recruiters had their own arms. We could stand a siege. A deckhouse forward contained the two galleys, one for the crew, the other for the recruits, and the sleeping place of the six A.B.'s. These were pretty comfortable, as indeed were the natives in the hold. This was divided into two compartments by wooden bars. Two rows of permanent bunks ran along each side. The Queensland Act, very comprehensive in non-essentials, specifies that the lowest tier of these bunks shall be at least six inches from the floor, and the interval between the tiers at least two feet six inches. The height between decks shall not be less than six feet six inches from deck to deck, and there shall be seventy-eight cubic feet of space to every adult. Twelve clear superficial feet of space is the allotment to every adult, and no ship

shall be authorised to carry a greater number of passengers than the proportion of one statute adult to every five superficial feet clear for exercise. I daresay this is all right. But the Act does not say what amount of sleeping room shall be allotted to each passenger, and consequently, our 120 immigrants were crowded together, lying athwart ship side by side, with little if any space between each individual. People, not used to natives, going down the hold, tasting the foul atmosphere, and seeing the natives packed together like sardines, would no doubt be disgusted. But they should first see these natives in their own homes, and they would see that the ventilation on board ship was purer, and the accommodation better than anything the recruits were used to on their native islands; and "high" though our hold might be, it was not worse than many steerages of Atlantic immigrant ships I had been in. The two hatchways were always open, and if the hold had been cleaned out every morning it would have been comparatively "sweet."

The single men and boys were forward—the married men and women aft. I have pointed out how very much married some of these were. There was no such thing as keeping the women below after certain hours, the same as in European immigrant vessels. The people did just as they liked—as they would on their own native islands. Those from the different islands slept side by side, and of course formed coteries together. I dare say the Ambrym men poked fun at and played jokes with those from Malo, and the women of Pentecost spoke evil things of the nymphs of Paphos; but there really seemed very little jealousy. They lay like herrings in their bunks for twelve hours out of the twenty-four, after the native fashion. They had not only blankets, but most of them mats on which to sleep; and many baskets of yams and bunches of cocoanuts were to be seen strung up in the bunks. The men with plural wives seemed the best off. They were all happy enough, with sufficient to eat and permission to sleep as long as they liked. I declare that I heard more laughter in one day on board this labour vessel, which the good people of Exeter Hall and their followers in the colonies would believe is only a slaver in disguise, than I heard in the whole voyage on any Atlantic immigrant ship. The rules and regulations which are necessary, perhaps, in one case would be irksome to these Kanakas. For instance, they can lie in their bunks

and smoke all the day long. If they had no matches they produced fire by rubbing a pointed stick into a groove in another piece of wood until the dust ignited. I was much interested in this process, differing from that of the Australian blacks, who make fire with a rotatory motion. But I took care that they were most of them well supplied with tobacco and matches. Amongst a people who, of all others in the world, are the most careful of fire, there was no danger in allowing them to smoke below.

Mr. Henry Russell ought to have received a handsome pension from the United States Government. If, on the average, every able-bodied immigrant who landed at Castle Garden was worth 1,000 dollars to the community, Mr. Russell added hundreds of thousands to the wealth of the great American Republic. His songs did more to popularise emigration than any number of lecturers or descriptive pamphlets. Thirty years ago all England was singing, "Cheer, Boys, Cheer," "To the West," and "Far upon the Sea." In the latter is a verse descriptive of how the happy emigrants "will gather in a ring, and with cheerful voices sing" the national songs of the particular portion of the United Kingdom from which they hail. Much the same occurred on the *Lizzie*. The Ambrym, Pentecost, Malo, or Mallicolo recruits foregathered in fine weather, and sang their native ditties. Taken as solos, and with the artistes sitting on the deck idly beating time with pieces of wood, I did not think much of these. They were monotonous and uninspiring. But at night they generally livened up down below. There were opposition bands of singers, and from the bunks on port and starboard came the swelling chorus. Time was kept by the beating of many feet. But when a real "sing-sing" occurred, the performers were all turned up on deck by Peter, and there was a full house, comprised of crew and passengers, with the exception of our Government Agent, who was past the vanity of the eye and ear, or had enough of the Kanaka in his daily routine of duties without going to him for amusement.

I am rather a connoisseur in native dances, from a Hawaiian *hula*, and a Tongan or Fijian *meke*, to the *corroboree* of the Australian black fellow, and *pilou-pilou* of New Caledonia. Some years ago, I spent a few pleasant days at Beltana station in South Australia—an oasis in the desert country of the "Far North" of that colony. In that district no rain falls, except by

accident; there is no such thing as grass; and the few stunted bushes afford, one would imagine, but scant provision for sheep and camels. But the former live, it seems, almost on the air, and on the water pumped by steam-power out of many deep wells in different parts of the run. Camels, like emus, are supposed to enjoy a diet of stones, and they have a range of many miles of country in which to pick up any *entrées* in the shape of bush or leaves. Beltana station is one of the wonders of South Australia. Mr. Phillipson—Sir Thomas Elder's general manager, and a partner in this run—has really conferred a public benefit by the attention he has devoted to camel-breeding. There one will see the ship of the desert in "mobs" by the hundred, harnessed in drays, hauling supplies to the out-stations on the Diamantina and western frontier of Queensland, or packed singly for other quarters, or even driven in pairs in a buggy through the township by Mr. Phillipson. I myself tried a camel-ride, on an animal which was brought out by the handsome Afghan *jemidar*, whose features reminded me of the Abyssinian kings in the Nineveh tablets. He was assisted by the wisest and meekest mortal I ever saw—so wise, so good to look at. "Daniel," said Mr. Phillipson. He was, verily, Daniel in the flesh, but Daniel after he had been some days in the lions' den, for this old Afghan was as dirty as none but an Oriental can be. "Snake" was the hack camel brought out to me to mount. Such a quantity of rugs had been piled on his back that my legs stretched out like an acrobat's. The reins were a piece of whipcord attached to a small plug of wood placed through the nostrils. "Snake" knelt down, obedient to some imperious word of command, and when I mounted, rose two legs at a time, nearly bucking me out of my seat. We started, but did not go far, and I wasn't particularly anxious to trust myself to "Snake's" impulse, although Mrs. Phillipson often mounted him. I remembered that camels despised promiscuous drinking: "Snake" would have no regard to my feelings when thirsty. I looked at the sickly, smoky shadows, caused by the heat, dancing from the ground, and pictured how I would look if "Snake" took it into his head to bear me over the clay-pan bed of Lake Torrens. When disappearing in a mirage, I should in the flesh be lost to the world for ever, although my skeleton might be found in months to come clinging to a gaunt camel somewhere near Port

Darwin. If "Snake" started on his wild career these things were possible, as I had not the slightest control over his movements. If I pulled the string, he turned his neck round and tried to bite my leg off. Whistling to show him that I didn't care, in fact was perfectly master of the situation, "Snake" suddenly knelt down, commencing with his fore legs. I had accidentally struck the signal to stop, and nearly came a "cropper" over it. Then I led "Snake" back to the store. "Take him away," I cried to the *jemidar*, "shoot him if you like. No more camel for me. I prefer a hansom cab." That night I had to lecture for the benefit of the Cemetery fund in Beltana township, and I didn't want to be one of the inmates. It is just the sort of desolate place, however, that a sane man, unless partaking of the kind hospitality of Mr. Phillipson, would prefer to die rather than live in.

Well, it was at Beltana I saw my last *corroboree*. A number of "wild blacks" from the Queensland border, hundreds of miles away, were camped at the creek, a dry bed, which once in three years, perhaps, contains water. These were returning from the Blinman mines, in the neighbourhood of which they obtained the red ochre, which is as gold and precious stones to them. As far as they have record, the northern blacks have visited the Blinman mountains for this purpose, passing through hundreds of hostile tribes, but travelling unmolested. They have the right of years of custom to go to the Blinman unheeded by their enemies, and are held sacred as pilgrims of old; pointed beards, denoting their peaceful object, being a distinguishing mark, even as staff and shell in the dark ages in Europe. The ochre, kneaded into lumps of clay, or in powder in bags, they carry on their heads. There were about thirty men together on this occasion, all ignorant of English, all nude, all perfectly wild. My courteous and witty host was a pioneer bushman in the far north of South Australia. He knew the blacks and their habits well. He humoured them, I suppose, just the same as he did his camels. Although the language of the Australian aboriginals differs considerably, yet there is, I believe, a pigeon dialect, a sort of *lingua franca*, or *Chinook*, by which the natives from north to south can make themselves understood. So Mr. Phillipson spoke understandingly to these men from the Diamantina and the Barcoo, and persuaded them to perform a first-class *corroboree*.

They anointed themselves with the ochre, which made a white mark on their black skins. With green leaves twisted round their ankles, they advanced in line, a loud *frou-frou* following each step as they smote the ground with the right foot, their thighs and arms quivering with that peculiar motion which it is difficult for the uninitiated to acquire. They shouted their war song, "*Buckeree, Bardo, Bardo, Buckeree Bardo,*" which has since been heard on the boards of the Theatre Royal, Melbourne. This song and dance, I hope, will some day astonish the theatre-going public of London.

Weird and mournful is the Australian *corroboree*. The festivities of a *bora* are not festive from our point of view. Our aborigines take their pleasure sadly. The melancholy born of the sorrowful sameness of nature oppresses them; the gum-tree and the marsupial are the saddest specimens of flora and fauna I know of. A *corroboree* may be savagely defiant, but it is the defiance of defence, of despair. The dances of the Polynesians, on the other hand, when not erotic, are the very essence of joy as well as of war. Blood-shedding is allied with laughter. These people are humorous life-takers. Killing is no murder, but merely a jubilant episode. They are more than half monkey, with a very large spice of the tiger. At the *Fête Nationale* at Noumea on the 14th of the previous July, the "labour boys" were permitted to have some share in the era of liberty which commenced at the taking of the Bastille. The helots of the convict colony of France were allowed their saturnalia. In the afternoon, in the place devoted to public games—chiefly evidenced by cricket, played by the few English or Australian youths on Sundays—the labour boys were allowed to compete in climbing a greasy pole. The trophies were gaudy scarfs, shirts, and other articles of clothing. The fun caused was immense. Three or four natives would be on the pole together, when, perhaps, the top one would slip, and down they would all come. Once, a drunken French sailor, relying on the superiority of his race and colour, attempted to climb the pole and pull the black boys down. On this day, however, when, in French eyes, Liberty, Equality, and Brotherhood were born, national justice asserted itself, and the offender was locked up. At night the place was thronged with Kanakas from nearly every isle in the Pacific. Around two immense bonfires *pilous*

were danced in a dozen different styles, and with a joyous *abandon*—a savage delight in the fury into which they worked themselves, entirely different from the melancholy of the *corroboree*. Looking at these boys—decent house-servants as a rule—wound up on this night of liberty to a pitch of ferocity, one could see that the tiger in them wanted to be kept down by the strong hand of law and custom.

But I have never seen a native dance which impressed me so much as a "Sing-Sing" on board the *Lizzie*. The boys from Ambrym were the best performers. From thirty to forty of them gathered together on the main-deck, with one in the centre, to whom they all looked as the leader. There was a considerable chattering, preliminary tuning up; then, the key-note having been given, a great yell burst out, and then, with one voice—

"Singi anga, singi anga
Ra mula mula,
Na malare ea,
Si e ni! si e ni!"

Then the dance commenced, keeping time with the solo. With the body forward, each one gave quick steps—a motion as in running—the art being never to deviate one inch from the first standpoint. It was the old "kicking up behind and before," brought from Africa by the ancestors of the present coloured citizens of the United States. The soloist, who might be an improvisatore, sang to a rude melody which was not unpleasing, and to every bar the tramp of many feet kept thorough time. Then the chorus, "*Singi anga, singi anga,*" burst out, and the step was quickened, a sudden stop, another great yell, and the verse was finished. A slight pause, and on again. The youngest boys joined in with the greatest earnestness. The song swelled out fiercer, a lay of joyous passion and hate, the step ever kept time, faster and stronger yet, till the ship shook and quivered as with the throbbing of a great engine. Each man danced with his face towards the leader, irrespective of his neighbour; but the limbs moved like clockwork. Each one went in for individual action, inspired with a desire of movement and shouting. It became exciting, contagious! I joined in the yells at the finish. Peter was there, and other white sailors joined in the step. Even our little white lady had surreptitiously stolen down the

steps from the dress-circle of the half-deck, and was doing a treadmill breakdown with the best of them. Boys from other islands joined in the chorus. Away on the port side some Pentecost men in turns executed a *pas de seul*. There was a whirl of arms and legs amongst them which would have filled a ballet-master with envy. On again, the action appeared to get into the blood. They raised their arms, they waved them defiantly, they shouted and yelled, but always in time and tune. A strange scene this, with the full moon gleaming on those naked bodies, flashing eyes, and excited faces filled with simulated passion—in some cases real for the moment.

At last they all sank exhausted on the deck. "Finish now," said Peter, who generally did the bossing of the natives. "Very good, you now go *nafurfur*." It was rather hard work to get them down below. Polynesians understand the art of catching cold better than any people I know of in the world, unless it be New York belles. To get themselves into a fever heat and a bath of perspiration, and then lie about on damp ground till thoroughly chilled, is an ordinary custom in the New Hebrides. And so they would have lain on the deck and caught cold if permitted. When safely packed below they would sleep well that night. On other evenings the boys from Mallicolo or Pentecost would have an innings. Their chorus was rather different, "*Lee ah lay ah!*" Perhaps to themselves a still greater difference was perceptible.

These dances and songs had a good effect on the recruits. It kept the devil out of them—the devil of idleness and *ennui*. I was very glad to see them all so happy. Very different this from the idea many people must form of a labour vessel after reading missionary reports. All ships in the trade encouraged "Sing-Sings," to pass the recruits' time and keep them from home-sickness. I have never seen as jovial gatherings on the Atlantic. Of course, in dancing, as in everything else, there were cliques formed. Men from the same island danced together, as they slept together, as you saw them with their arms round each other's necks, sharing, perhaps, a cocoa-nut. But all the boys were friendly; and yet they came from hostile islands! I could not help hoping that some germs of good might arise from this commingling on our passage. If they could but be kept long enough in Queensland, or if influences to perpetuate this

good feeling could be brought to bear there! At least this *camaraderie* could not have an evil effect.

I remember an incident of a different kind. With Captain Kidley, of the White Star Line, I once went into the steerage to see a riot quelled amongst the immigrants. "The gang" was on the war-path against the German passengers. "Arrah, boys," said a future alderman of New York, "let's go and kill all the Dutchmen." This gentlemanly suggestion was nipped in the bud by the ringleaders being placed in irons. Our recruits did not give us any trouble of that sort.

The representative of the Government on board the *Lizzie* was a "character." He was an old Queensland pioneer, one of the fathers of Gladstone. He believed that port to be the natural "hub" of the colony, and that nothing but the jealousy and mean spirit of the people of Brisbane and Rockhampton had kept it from being the capital. He was a justice of the peace, and had been mayor of Gladstone, in which capacity he entertained Governor Blackall, and "helped him twice to sucking pig." Pork has been a sacred dish in his eyes ever since. He was a thorough Conservative of the old English type, believed in Queen, Sunday-schools, Gladstone, and pork. He was a good man, and on Sundays read books of prayers and sermons. On the last voyage of the *Lizzie* Mr. F. undertook to bring religion home to the sailors and Kanakas. He held services in the fok'sle and in the hold. Jack would have none of it, and the New Hebrideans said "plenty gammon," and so Mr. F. gave up the missionary business. He considered Mr. Anthony Trollope to be the most untruthful of modern writers for not doing justice to Gladstone. "He just went ashore whilst the steamer stopped, and saw a few people, and believed what they told him." I narrated my experiences of that city; how, "lying" over there one night in the *Lady Bowen*, I walked through its streets and into its hotels without seeing a solitary policeman. Returning on board the steamer I found the whole presentable population having a decent drink and taking a hand with Captain Cottier. The presentable population said "Whisky." That is all I know of Gladstone. Mr. F. now and then electrified me with the remark, "There were two stores built in twelve months." Or, "A new wharf was put up in 1870." "Where?" I queried. "Why, at Gladstone, to be sure," he scornfully replied. It was sad that

this veteran should be in the uncongenial sphere of a Government Agent, instead of passing his old age in the township he so loved and of which he dreamed and rambled. As a Queensland pioneer Mr. F. was "a handy man," and also a scorner of the conventionalities of fashions, if not of the decencies of society. You would not take him to have been the host of vice-royalty—in fact, you would not take him to be a Government Agent. He could turn his hand to nearly anything, but his specialty was in converting pig into pork. The natural bent of his mind that way was intensified by the injudicious appetite of Queensland's Governor. He appeared to me never so happy as when killing and dressing a pig. He was great upon salting down and the curing of hams, and also devoted three days to the manufacture of a quantity of sausages, which my bad taste induced me to pass by. These were the diversions of his leisure hours. He spent most of his time with his charges, the cooking and distribution of whose food he superintended. He pottered about amongst them from morning till eve, looking, I thought, on the recruits as so much "stock."

Mr. F., I believe, was thoroughly anxious to do his duty, and would keep as far as possible to any proper schedule of rules and regulations which might be drawn up for the supervision of the immigrants under his charge. But he had to give in to a great extent to the existing loose system. He tried to reform things; objected at first to go out in the boat recruiting on a Sunday; would insist on receiving a bunch of cocoanuts with each boy to whose friends presents were made, that the letter of the Queensland Act prohibiting barter for labourers might be carried out. He ended, of course, like the rest of the Government Agents, in not going in the boats at all. But on board, *as far as he knew*, he did his best to make the recruits happy. He plastered their sores, and doctored them with salts and senna or tartar emetic, his treatment being very much of the Dotheboys Hall stamp. Mr. F. would also dance a hornpipe with the recruits down in the hold to keep up their spirits. I don't suppose half the Government Agents did as much as Mr. F. Everything was left to a man's discretion. Having asked him about any regulations or private orders which might have been given him at the immigration department, he told me "There were only the printed instructions, not even signed, and when I asked Sir

Ralph Gore for information, his last words were, '*Don't you tread on the captain's toes too much.*' I asked him if the rule as to not carrying arms was to be carried out; he said 'Oh, certainly.' Yet when we were out at sea, I found three cases of rifles on board, all with the Customs seal." When official superiors give such hints, and sanction such breaking of the law, it is a wonder that Government Agents do their duty at all. Some few, it was alleged, in old times got so disgusted that they took to their bunks and drank gin, and let the captain and mates do as they pleased.

The letter of the Queensland Act was broken on every ship by the Government Agents as well as by the captains and the officials on shore. Nothing could be more definite than the following clauses in the instructions issued to Government Agents:—

"41. The exportation of arms and ammunition in vessels licensed under the Polynesian Labourers' Act is prohibited, except in accordance with the provisions of the Navigation Act; and as it is desirable to prevent the exportation of arms and ammunition in the possession of islanders, Government Agents, masters of labour vessels, and officers of customs are instructed to see that these provisions are strictly observed."

Yet, with the knowledge of every one concerned, from the chief immigration agent downwards, each labour vessel carried arms and ammunition to trade with the natives. And, unfortunately, the firearms were not of the old African trade pattern. Those guns, made specially in Birmingham for the Gold Coast, were simply tested by pouring water through the barrels. If these did not leak they passed as fit for trade. The first time of firing the gun was sure to burst; when either there would be no more African, or he would require a new weapon. But in the New Hebrides there are "arms of precision" everywhere. Years back I remember old Tower muskets were sold to the returned labourers in Maryborough. But now you see nothing but Sniders. In some islands there were two or three rifles in a family, and you might buy old muzzle-loaders for a stick of tobacco. On Tanna nearly every man owned a Snider and a cartridge-belt. It is true that the returned boys spent their wages in firearms; but unless the labour ships supplied them with ammunition, these were soon useless. And every

labour vessel carried Sniders for trade. A breech-loader would buy anybody or anything.

Mr. F., unfortunately, was in a chronic state of warfare with the cook, the mate, or the recruiter; and, old though he was, was very belligerent at times. The natives after a time got over the respect with which the mysterious power behind "Government," as they called him, invested him. They chaffed him, and even indulged in slight horse-play at his expense. "When me get Queensland me speak policeman you steal me, me put you along a calaboose," said one boy who had been in the colony before, and knew his rights. Mr. F. stood all this as a huntsman would the playful exuberance of his hounds, or a herdsman the frolicsome antics of young cattle or sheep.

On one point only was Mr. F. inflexible. The recruits were obliged to eat their allowance without waste, which was a thing abhorrent to him. The scale of provisions on board ship was fixed by the Act at 2lb. of rice, 2 oz. of sugar, and ½oz. of tea daily, "comforts" in the shape of 1½oz. of tobacco and one pipe weekly being added. "Equivalents" were often given. Many of the islanders did not take kindly to rice, an unknown food to them, and a careful captain in the labour trade would be sure to obtain a supply of yams in the islands to break in the recruits gradually to the rice diet; so, for the first week the rations consisted of yams for breakfast at eight bells in the morning and rice and biscuit with tea at four o'clock in the afternoon. Two feeds per diem were considered enough for the recruits. There was a special galley with two large boilers for the preparation of their food. Two cooks were appointed, who were assisted by any number of assistant-cooks, and the meals were served out under the personal supervision of Mr. F., who sat with a bag of biscuits before him like one selling apples at a fair, and handed one to each recruit, who passed with his plate of rice and pannikin of tea. They never attempted a double game on the old man, not only because they were fearful of punishment, but because really they did not require an extra biscuit, having had sufficient to eat.

Squatting about on deck, or lying within bunks below, the natives took their *ki-ki* more or less like brute beasts than human beings. I would have made all feed on deck in fine weather, as far more conducive to health; but our G. A. did not

seem to be particularly strong in hygienic theory or practice. The yams were welcomed at breakfast time, and at night the biscuits went down, although it was some time before many took to the hot, sweetened tea. People whose sole drink had been water or cocoanut milk did not, I imagined, require this. It seemed almost as great an absurdity as the mosquito nets of the Fiji Act. It tended to make them nervous and dyspeptic, and the only thing which could be said in its favour was that in Queensland tea drinking was preferable to water drinking, and the allowance on the voyage accustomed them to what they would receive on the plantations. But the rice many of them bucked at. Numbers had brought private stores of yams and cocoanuts; one small family of seven boys from Ambrym had even a pig given to them by their friends, which the G. A. had a pleasure in killing and cooking for them. Roasting of yams went on all day at the galley fire, and rice, consequently, was rejected at night. Mr. F. became wroth, and the order was issued, "No more yams to be roasted between meals; no more boys allowed in the galley." Then the artless youngsters crowded around the stove-pipe on the roof of the house, as if warming themselves. It was a long time before Mr. F. found out that they lowered yams by a piece of string to an accomplice at the fire below, which, when done, were drawn up again and "wolfed" with the joy, appetite, and zest which proverb and personal experience in my schoolboy days assure me appertain only to stolen apples.

After this it might be readily imagined that they didn't crowd much for their rice at night. I must testify, however, to the pleasing order and regularity with which the recruits came for their rations. There was nothing like the hustling and scrambling I had seen on Atlantic immigrant ships. But I have been told that this routine was not carried out on all labour vessels—that sometimes the food was just placed in tins on deck, and the natives helped themselves like pigs.

Our yams nearly all gone, and many still refusing to eat rice, Mr. F. said he must adopt heroic measures. With a great deal of sound and fury he told the boys they must *ki-ki* rice, or else ——! The boys did not appear to be very much afraid of him, until one morning two of them were detected throwing their allowance overboard. Then the trouble commenced. The

G. A.'s *modus operandi* was very like that of the Nevada boardinghouse-keeper, who, when a new chum asked for "quail on toast," produced a six-shooter, and roared: "You want quail on toast? You'll have hash, and you'll eat it." Terrible in his wrath, Mr. F. glared at the two Ambrym boys. "You want yams, do you? You'll have rice, and you'll eat it!" He handcuffed the lads around the ankles. Not much punishment this to them, as the recruits liked nothing better than to lie around without stirring, but still this exercise of power frightened them —they did not know what might be behind. So they bolted the rice till their eyes were nearly shooting out of their heads, whilst the others flocked around and chaffed them. "Ah! ah! You no *ki-ki* rice." It was a pleasing farce, and was successful, in that hereafter there was no trouble on the rice question.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### TO "CARPENTARIA."

THE captain of the *Lizzie* was a young man, a native of Kent. He was humorous and musical—played the violin, or wrote a long report for the Townsville paper, or performed a breakdown with the boys. He rather liked naked niggers, I think. Our white children, also, did not find anything common or unclean in the number of black skins. There was a joint humanity, which they recognised, not having learnt to be fastidious in respect of colour, cleanliness, and clothes. All day long they were entrusted by their mother to the care of a number of male and female nurses. Both men and women made a great fuss over the baby, which was really about as good as an infant could be, although thirty days of a baby in a small saloon is enough for me for a few years. There were several of the women on board who had had children themselves, and should have been good nurses; but I really thought the men were the most careful. Our five-year-old, N., was being rapidly spoilt on this trip by being able to queen it over so many subordinates. She could order any she wanted to come and play with her, and instruct her in mysterious complications of cat's cradle. These she afterwards imparted to me, that I might show to my "little girl." "Why you no bring your little girl alonga you, and I plenty play alonga her?" asked N. My little girl was slightly too old, and there were difficulties in the way, I told her.

But if N. queened it over all the Ambrym and Pentecost lads, asserting the superiority of her position and race, the *revanche* took place in the way in which the savage life fascinated her. She imitated the natives in every possible way, wore her dress like a *sulu*, a handkerchief tied round her head, feathers behind her ears, and bare arms and feet adorned with strings of beads acquired from the natives. She exercised her right of *lalla* very extensively, in demanding anything which pleased her. But it was not only in dress that N. was a little savage. She imitated

the natives in speaking the very worst of *bêche-de-mer* English, and in every action she aimed at being one of them. Planted on an island away from white people, she would soon have become the same as her associates. The influences of heredity would count for naught. It was interesting to note the progress backward already made by this child, who would shortly suffer dismally in again being broken in to civilised forms, at the school to which she was to be sent.

It was almost as bad as being on a savage island, for the ship, swarming with black skins, reeked with black odours. The few whites showed like specks among them. We were but twelve adults against one hundred and twenty. Not much chance in a mutiny! I have described the Government Agent, the recruiter, and the captain. There were five able seamen, a boatswain, and a boy. The boatswain, "Mac," was an ancient mariner, who had also been a digger on the Palmer and Charters Towers. Of the A.B.'s, one was an Englishman, one an American, one German, one Swede, and one Scotchman. They were as decent a set of men as I would wish to meet with in any fok'sle, and although the captain, like so many shipmasters, described them as men "who would sell our lives," I think if I had wanted a man to stick to me in a tight place, I would have chosen him forward, and not aft. The "boy" I at first felt sorry for. A London street Arab, brought up on a training ship, he was, although active and quick in many ways, not smart in sailor craft. He got kicked about from foremast to mizzen, and none had a good word for poor "Johnny." He had to sleep down in the hold with the blacks, and, even more than the little girl, assumed the habits of a savage. He laughed, and danced, and sang in their midst, and the niggers made sport of him, and pulled him about. If Johnny were marooned in the South Seas, he would become a white savage in a few years, and a dangerous sort of savage too, for the hereditary traits he inherited were not those to improve on barbaric training.

Our Chinese cook deserves a niche in the Temple of Fame. He was as innocent in appearance as Ah Sin, who "played it upon William," but his "no sabe" to every reprimand was a masterpiece of art. For it was not natural; no native of the Canton Kiang was ever such a fool as "Cookee"

pretended to be. Should there be fowls for the cabin table, he would send them into the fok'sle, and supply us with the perpetual joint of roast pork. Should Mrs. Captain have put a couple of eggs in our pudding, it was sure to be transposed, and when the delinquent was called in, he looked pensive, and "no sabe" was his refrain. I did not believe in cookee's "no sabe"—all the more that in some little attentions to myself, which I repaid in kind and coin, he was as smart, and intelligent, and courteous as none but a good Chinese servant can be. I wondered if Barnard Williams, citizen of Maine, very able seaman—that neat little man with the grey moustache and polite manner—had anything to do with "putting up this game." Barney appeared to enjoy that breast of fowl one Sunday, more than if it had been served under ordinary conditions. Barney, as the boss euchre-player in the ship, no doubt knew how to arrange the bowers.

There was a little moderate gambling going on in the fok'sle for sticks of tobacco. On one occasion two men played for their shirts, and the winner claimed the stakes off the other's back. But, altogether, they were a good lot of men on board. If there was the usual amount of "language," there was no trouble amongst themselves, and they were all good and kind to our native passengers, as I take it men of white Anglo-Saxon descent always are towards helpless people — even as they were to their slaves in olden days.

The recruiting sergeant lets his recruits be drunk and disorderly on the day of enlistment; in fact, generally getting them whilst in the first state, he is bound to overlook the second. Peter encouraged jollity amongst our boys all the time. He was kind to them, looked after those who were sick, and distributed green cocoanuts, sugar-cane, and encouraging words all around. The tobacco was supposed to be given out once a week, but the boys did not obtain their allowance. According to the Act, they should have received one and a-half ounces; but the sticks handed out to them only ran eighteen to the pound. This was one of the acts of smartness which I objected to in our skipper, and, when a quantity of tobacco was taken away from some of the lads, having been found in their bunks, I was very indignant. "They can't smoke it, and so they've no right to it," I was told. There being no pretence that these lads had

stolen the tobacco, it was a paltry act of meanness. However, I dare say the lads did not think much about it. From morn till eve there was laughter and joking amongst them. At six o'clock half the boys were aroused, the port and starboard sides on alternate mornings, and then there commenced a drawing of water and scrubbing of decks. They stood in rows, and splashed each other amidst yells of laughter. "Now then, cocoanuts," Peter cried, and the scrubbing gang took cocoa-nut husks sawn in twain from a cask, and rubbed away at the decks. Others threw sand about, and the water was always splashing around. Sometimes—about once a week—the women came up to have a bath. They squatted down, and shivered under the buckets of the briny poured over them. Then they stood in the rising sun to dry. Sometimes the baby was handed over to Tata, or Dick, or Charley, and had a douche. She was a regular little sea nymph, and stood firmly to receive the shower, in which she revelled. It was quite lively and cheerful in the morning watch, with the splashing of water, the scrubbing of the decks, the confusion of many tongues, the laughter, and the cry of "*Ita! Ita!*" with which every boy encouraged the others, trying to do as little as possible himself. But there ought to have been a regulation, as in European immigrant vessels, that the recruits should be turned up on deck for a certain time every day. As it was, many lay in their bunks all day long, and, in a thirty days' voyage, the blankets were only aired three times; consequently, as we went along there was an excelsior perfume about the hold—it became higher and higher.

I have never in the course of many years' experience of European emigration across the Atlantic, and some knowledge of the immigrant traffic to Australia, seen any passengers so jolly as these of ours. About half had previously been away from their homes, either in Fiji or Queensland. Two had been in Samoa, engaged by Captain Proctor for Messrs. Godeffroy. These old hands were smart and respectful. They gave me many reminiscences of their labours, and all preferred Queensland. Some had been engaged on plantations, others about mills or house-work, but the story was all the same—"Plenty work, plenty tucker, good bockus." They knew not only the difference between the wages paid in Fiji and Samoa and those in Queensland, but told me that, in the latter

place, the Saturday half-holiday movement had always been observed. That these men came back to Australia willingly and gladly, was to my mind one of the greatest possible proofs against the alleged enormities of the labour traffic. They told the new chums what they had got to expect, and so I think very few of our passengers landed in Queensland who were not thoroughly *au fait* with what would be demanded of them, and what they could demand. I made it my special business to interview every man and woman who could speak English, and to find out under what conditions they had been recruited, and what were their impressions. Those who could not speak English had always some one I could communicate through. This, not once nor twice, but all through the passage, when I had gained their confidence by gifts of tobacco, etc. My conclusion was that every man, woman, and lad appeared to have come willingly and gladly; and, as regards kidnapping, the mode of recruiting the boy Outon from Aneitium appeared to have been the nearest approach to that.

"Willingly and gladly;" but how about those mothers who had left their infants behind, who had escaped from domestic tyranny to seek their fortunes, at all events to find peace, over the seas? I fancied sometimes that, in the eyes of "Mary Pentecost," there was a wistful, yearning look, as of one who still thought of the little ones at home. But I do not endow these people with any of the fine feelings attributed to them by the missionaries. They can neither love nor hate, feel joy nor sorrow, for any great length of time. They are emphatically children, and to them "sufficient for the day is the evil and the good thereof." To-day satisfies them. I don't suppose Mary had the slightest thought as to what would happen if she returned at the end of three years. Perhaps her former husband would be dead, perhaps he would be reconciled by gifts from her and her present husband. Three years was a long way off; and Mary and her mates were freer and happier now than they had been before in their lives. It is perfectly true what the missionaries allege, that labour vessels afford an easy way for elopement; yet I cannot see that this is any more reason for stopping the labour trade than it would be to urge that the tidal trains should be discontinued, because they often bear runaway couples to the Continent. The labour traffic does not *make* the

people unfaithful, except on the ground of Tarquin's excuse *in re* Lucrece: "Oh! opportunity, thy crime is great!" In the happy isles of the New Hebrides there is always buying and selling of women, or women are running off with men without hansel being given; and then there is fighting, blood is shed, peace is made, there is a "*sing-sing*," and killing of pigs. As in the days of Scripture and mythology, all the trouble here is about women. The only question is, are they happier on board this labour vessel, and after they arrive at their destination, than they were at home? I unhesitatingly answer, "Yes!"

One soon recognised the type of the different islanders—of individual types there were so many. There was one very light-coloured man from Pentecost, with perfectly European features, who must have had a considerable proportion of white blood in his veins. But he was a thorough savage—his nostrils were slit, and he could speak no word of English. I wondered if the influences of heredity would show when he had been trained in Australia. There was a dwarf from Malo, a bearded little man, no taller than a boy of twelve, and with less muscle. I should not think he would pass under the Act as "physically capable" of plantation work. Tata, who had been in Maryborough, was a sort of high and low comedy man, always up to some prank, always laughing, always ready to nurse and play with the baby, speaking excellent English, always addressing me as "Sir." I ranked him as the best boy in the ship. Dick Pentecost, who was one of the cooks, was perhaps the handsomest darkey, but he had a flashing eye and a rebellious spirit, which I was afraid might lead him into trouble with overseers. He might have stood as a picture of some youthful Dred Scott, who wanted to "call no man my master," an ambition totally out of place in an advanced civilization. Dick, however, was a favourite with us. I was much amused one day at a little difficulty he had with "*Man-a-Wee-wee*." This boy, a native of Ambrym, having been three years in Noumea, received the above nickname from his companions. Airing his superior knowledge, he had early in the voyage raised discontent amongst some of the new chums by asserting that he knew we were bound to the French colony. When the length of the passage proved that this was a fiction, *Man-a-Wee-wee* fell into disrepute for a time. But his native "cheek," French polished, soon brought

him to the front again. On this day Mr. F. had been following the avocation which of all things he loved—pig-sticking. Dick had been assisting him, the rule being that he should receive his reward in the entrails, portions of which he could boil and eat. *Man-a-Wee-wee* lay on the top of the galley all the time, watching the process of cleaning and scrubbing, Dick working hard. This finished, down came *Man-a-Wee-wee* and collared Dick's lawful spoil. Then there was a jabber of tongues and a wrestling and harmless striking, for no savage can use his fists. *Man-a-Wee-wee* was not much hurt, but he was disgraced, and he had lost the "chittlings." *Man-a-Wee-wee* stood quivering in every limb with excitement, tears of passion coursing down his cheeks, murder in his eye if he had aught wherewith to strike. Dick, with one foot firmly planted *à la* Fitz-James, his hands clinched, his eye fixed on *Man-a-Wee-wee*, was the grandest spectacle of a savage I had seen for many a day. He taunted his foe. "*Ita*" (come on), said he; but *Man-a-Wee-wee* did not seem inclined to *ita*, however much he might have wished it. He was no match for Dick, but as his friends from Ambrym gathered around, and the Pentecost boys were outnumbered, I thought it wise to interfere.

There were a few "missionary men" on board. These, I suppose, should have represented the extreme of civilization, but they did not. They were as stupid as "bushmen" who have had little communion with white people. In this strange *bêche-de-mer* dialect, which the natives all learn, "man a bush" is a term of reproach or derision. If any one is awkward the others cry, "You man a bush"—country bumpkin. But the missionary men improved daily by contact with the old hands; that is, they improved in quickness and smartness, although I am afraid they did learn such colonial phrases as "No —— fear." I encouraged them to keep the Sabbath, but, as they did nothing all the week, they were at some little difficulty to distinguish the day. One Sandwich boy had his hymn-book and a catechism, and he sang dreamily whilst his comrades joined in the chorus. Jack, one of our boat's crew, and decoy, was devout in this; he always took care to explain that he was a "man a missionary." Outon, my recruit, soon made himself at home, and throwing off the sad stupid air which the *man a Gam* is taught to assume, proved himself as smart as the rest. He was a strong, well-

built youngster, and in the sportive wrestling and romping which took place at night could hold his own with the best of them. But as evil communication corrupts good manners, Outon was in danger of becoming as much of a savage as Johnny or little N. He must have been a first-class humbug ashore. There he professed to dislike tobacco. I found afterwards that he was an accomplished smoker—he was always around when I was giving away my tobacco, for although I had first scared him with the mysteries of Melbourne, he had a dog-like affection for me. He would crawl up to the quarter-deck, and sit by my side at night without saying a word, as quiet as the cat, which was my particular friend, and which brought rats in triumph to my bedside. One night, Outon, after deep thought, asked me, "What name black man work at Queensland?" I told him he would have to work on a plantation. "Me no want to work alonga sugar cane. Me want work alonga house." But I explained to Outon that in this matter he was no free agent.

It is always difficult to eradicate the old Adam, especially the savage and untutored Adam. The fairy story of the princess, who had been a cat, and could not resist the sight of a mouse or a rat, has parallels in everyday life. How shocked were the ladies on board a P. and O. steamer at the uneducated and strong-mouthed young party who was dressed so neatly, and so long as she kept her mouth shut was such "a perfect lady," when a school of porpoises so astonished her that in childish glee she clapped her hands and cried in the vernacular of her youth, "Oh! look at the —— whales." Some years back at Loma Loma I had seen in school one early morn a "mob" of Tongan and Fijian girls, budding beauties as demure and shy as you would wish, under the eye of the missionary and the stranger. The rapidity with which Tongan girls did the sums I set them on the blackboard would astonish the "lightning calculators." But afterwards, following a crowd along one of the bush paths, I found these same girls amongst some 200 performers practising a *meke* to be given before Maafu at an early date. Their faces were painted like those of their ancestors. As they swayed with voluptuous motions in the dance, church and school were forgotten. There, under the palms, was the worship of the South Sea Ashtaroth. That *meke* was a dance, a song, a prayer. In line men and women chanted the chorus, keeping time to the

dance. Some old warriors in front, with clubs waving, and beating the ground, gave out the chant—words of an unknown tongue to them. And then the column formed into strange lines, and signs were made which taught me that this *meke* was but a remnant of some celebration of ancient sun-worship. I ate raw fish in the chief's house, and speculated on the masonic symbols here exemplified, and on the readiness with which these good, demure missionary boys and girls, who gave bountifully towards the faith, can in a very short time become savages again. This was not like the May-Day revels or Christmas mummery in England, sad revelry and sad mumming too often. At Loma Loma the pulse of life beat strong and fierce, and the old heathen impulses, those of the natural man, were not yet extinct.

Even so with Outon. He left off his old shirt on the second day he came on board, and would soon have been as naked and shameless as the rest, but that I reproved him and gave him a new shirt, at which he was rather proud. He ought to have had some clothes given him when he came on board. Nothing was paid to or for him. He was one of the voluntary recruits who reduce the average in price. There were boys on board for whom a musket each had to be given to relieve the feelings of their friends at their departure. But, altogether, this lot of 120 boys had not cost £100 in trade, which was very cheap. The average cost out of Noumea used to be thirty shillings a head. I must say that when I heard that Outon had a widowed mother, I wished that we had left something for her, and I impressed upon him the necessity of taking all his three years' wages home to her, or of buying only useful things such as calico and knives, and of not being such a fool as to spend his money in firearms and ammunition. Nothing having been given to Outon as hansel, I thought that a shirt and some calico might be spared. I suggested this, but the captain said, "He will get all he's entitled to before he goes ashore." This was part of the meanness—perhaps he thought it attention to his employer's interests—which I objected to. Fairly treated, happy, and jolly as the boys were, there was still no necessity to screw a few pounds of tobacco and a few dozen of pipes out of their allowance. Outon wore my shirt, then, but otherwise the veneer of civilisation wore off rapidly. Social surroundings impressed

him; at Aneitium he was a humbug, here he would be a savage. When the ship was painted, and all the boys took the advantage of breaking out into red spots, Outon, too, dabbed his nose and ears with vermilion to make himself look beautiful in the eyes of the Malo girls, on whom, as yet, I did not think he had made much impression. But I shamed him out of this. He however, cut his hair close in imitation of the rest, which was an advantage from the point of cleanliness, although it did not by any means improve the appearance of the women. The men trimmed their beards after the fashion of Peter, who to them was the very pink and mould of all that was worth copying.

When the decks had been washed, and the men and women, who might also have sacrificed a little to cleanliness, had dried themselves in the sun, and the morning meal of rice and biscuit had been given out, there commenced the trouble of how to get through the day. Our native passengers did not find this to be such hard work as we did in the cabin. Their daily routine was to do nothing except play cat's cradle, or sometimes to assist in the killing of a pig, which ceremony was always a source of great excitement amongst them. Down below in their bunks, in shady corners on the deck, and on the top of the galley, these happy islanders slept and loafed. In spite of the row between Pentecost and Ambrym, as represented by Dick and *Man-a-Wee-wee*, these natives, natural enemies on their own shores, were now friendly and peaceable enough. There was a good fellowship and *camaraderie* amongst them, engendered, it may be, by the bond of colour. This must have been productive of some amount of good, however small. In every respect our immigrants seemed happier than those I had met on the Atlantic, who had left "hard times" in Europe, perhaps to find still hard times, if not quite so hard, in New York. If they were not free agents for a term, they were happier in that they had no care or responsibility. They were, however, as free and unfettered in their actions on board as any white immigrants. In the matter of morality, perhaps too free; but then morality was an unknown quantity on their native islands, and this was not a missionary ship.

One day we killed a shark. He was a "boomer," and hungry. We had but a small hook, but Barney, from Maine,

managed to play him well, and when he came to the top of the water, as he squirmed around, Winchester, Snider, and revolver were discharged at the white patch between the fins below the mouth. He was soon the deadest shark in the Pacific. The joy of the natives, who crowded around us on the poop, was rapturous; they wanted me to shoot the lifeless fish again as it was being hauled up by a running bow-line. There were seventeen shots through it, the small heart was cut to pieces, and the jaw broken. Barney sliced it into junks, and it was distributed between the boys, who boiled the flesh in the rice coppers, and had a great feed on their natural enemy, and afterwards chased each other up and down the rigging in pure lightness of heart or to promote digestion. I was pleased at their pleasure. To slay a shark was to my mind a good work. This fish is a scourge when alive, and a nuisance dead, as the scent of the cooked one hung about the ship for days. Happy were the boys who could enjoy such food. My soul began to revolt at the continual diet of fresh pork, although the pigs obtained at Aneitium were the best possible. How Charles Lamb would have revelled in the white toothsome flesh and fat and the brown crackling, with a delicate subtle flavour of cocoanut pervading it—a joy in pig which the gentle Elia never knew! To breeders in the colonies I suggest that two cocoanuts a day given to a store porker will fatten it well and cheaply, and impart a flavour only surpassed by the peach-fed hogs of Virginia. Lamb would have been in ecstasies over our roast pork, but I think after thirty days even he would have cried "Hold, enough."

Many days of pork and uncongenial society was an infliction not counterbalanced by interesting events. In the saloon, Peter was the only one who worked. Morning and night he hammered away at his navigation, studying to pass as "mate." The skipper was kindly coaching him, and the difference in race was here wonderfully apparent. The teacher, naturally quick at figures, mental calculation, and with an inherent faculty of placing things logically—when any question not touching his own interest was in hand. The pupil, of Norse descent, should have lived in the days when the sea kings conquered other nations by their stout hearts and strong arms. How hard he worked at the problems, which seemed to have been specially invented to vex his soul!

The rival conchologists on board displayed their treasures, and wrangled over the values of the shells. There was a deadly hatred for a time between the Government Agent and the mate touching a few cowries. The pursuit of this branch of science tends, I believe, to blunt the moral sense. I knew one very eminent gentleman, renowned throughout Australia for his attainments, of whom another rival collector once said, "I wouldn't leave Dr. —— alone with my cabinet; he *couldn't* keep his fingers off the *voluta dipsomania*. He *hasn't got one!*" And the rival collector danced a *pas de seul* with joy, but suddenly stopped, and, with the glare of an ogre, said, "Wouldn't I like to steal his *cowria cocksiona!*" I trust Dr. —— will pardon me if I am not exactly correct in the technicalities. So I was not surprised that our amateur scientists quarrelled and accused each other of any amount of pilfering. To their noise add a loud-toned musical-box and a jarring scraping on the cabin outside, preparatory to painting, and it will be seen that the saloon was not the place for quiet reflection.

A week out from Aneitium we were encompassed by the deadest calm I had ever seen. At night every star was reflected in the glassy deep, shining—as it seemed—far down into the bosom of the ocean, as in a great lake. There was not a swell or ripple, or a "cat's-paw." The next morning the Ambrym boys made some rude boats out of cocoanut husks, rigging them with masts and sails. They set them adrift, sometimes ablaze, sometimes with a small charge of powder inside, which shortly would blow up. These fireships were to propitiate the "wind-god," and afford amusement to us all. The breeze sprang up, and in the afternoon we were off Cato Island, lon. 155°, lat. 23°, 250 miles from the Queensland coast. This was perhaps half-a-mile long, low and sandy, with a little scrub at one end. There were on shore several wooden beacons, raised by some surveying expedition, and the sands were black with thousands of birds. Away on the long, dangerous reef, running to the south-east, there were some strange rocks, which, covered with large birds, looked like boats filled with passengers. There were soundings on this bank at from twelve to fifteen fathoms. This was the centre of what old navigators termed the "Coral Sea." The islands herein were rich in guano, some of which had been very

unprofitably worked by companies formed in Australia. I should very much have liked to have gone ashore on Cato Island, to ascertain if the penguins would, as I had been so often told, allow themselves to be handled or killed without attempting flight. As night fell, and we left this land on our lee, from all quarters of the heavens birds flew by, in tens, in hundreds, in thousands —sometimes low down along the surface of the water, sometimes high overhead. In the latter I recognised the beautiful boatswain bird. Straight as arrows they flew towards this sandbank, where they crowded and huddled together at night, to sally off again at early morn, after scraping rude nests in the sand, and laying many eggs, which were hatched promiscuously and with a great percentage of loss. The life of a seafowl is still an exceeding great mystery.

Now the clothing was brought out and looked over. Our industrious Government Agent cut the bottoms off many trousers to adapt them to our small boys. Bits of tape and sinnet were run through the petticoats, good enough for the day of inspection. On Sunday the clothes were given out to our recruits. The women received a cloth petticoat and a print gown each. The Act says that a "wincey dress" should be given; but then print is cheaper. The women did not understand the lower garments, or how to fix them, and were assisted in their toilets by Peter, and Mac, and Barney. The men received a shirt and a pair of pants each. As each man came up to the poop, the G.A. fixed his eyes on him, took a mental measure, and gave him a fit accordingly, which was very often an exceeding misfit. The pants, which had been shortened in the legs for the boys, were still bulky in the waist, and reached up to the armpits, giving a most ludicrous appearance. But in nearly every case the waists were too large for our supple Kanakas. Some men came back and wanted a better fit, but after many changes the result was the same. The mystery of the buttons puzzled a great many of them, and required elucidation from the old hands, who had previously travelled and been clothed. I calculated that this sham outfit did not run to more than *7s. 6d.* a head for either sex. Certainly, these clothes improved the personal appearance of some, and particularly the women, but the magnificent torsos of a few of the men were lost in the levelling costume of a "Crimean." It was now that one realised what an equaliser dress is. A few

minutes back some looked miserable with their boils and blains and imperfect development, while some, in limb and muscles, could have stood as models for Apollo or Hercules. One lot was improved by dress, the other reduced. The recruits were told to put away their clothes till the day of landing; until then the women could only take a pride in contrasting the colour and pattern of their gowns.

What an excitement there was when we struck the North Reef lighthouse, and the boys learnt that we were "close up" to Queensland. True, we had to tack on and off for a day, but the sight of it revived our spirits. The prospect of being ashore made all hands eat up their rice at night. They chased each other round the rigging, they seized one after another of their number, and bore them away high ahead with yells as to a cannibal feast. The G.A. even joined in the sport; they tumbled him about and laughed like schoolboys. I was happy and light-hearted, for I loathed pork, and the "medical comforts" were giving out.

Inside the Great Barrier Reef there commences a voyage between mainland and islands unsurpassed in beauty by anything in the world. We passed the Percy, the Cumberland, and the Northumberland group. Some of these islands are larger than several of the sites of the missionary stations in the New Hebrides. In beauty of outline, they are not behind anything in Polynesia. The foliage was scantier here, but the pines were picturesque. One missed, however, the graceful cocoanut palms. Why not plant them there? We were in the same latitude as the Loyalties, where they flourished. If the cocoanut once got a start, the addition to the wealth of the future Queensland would be very considerable, and the remains of the aboriginal population might be supported there. In that beautiful inland sea the waters were always calm. Far away to windward the Barrier Reef protected it, and the chain of islands was an additional breakwater. I have sailed along there many times, but always in steamers hugging the coast, like the A.S.N. boat, which we then saw bearing up to Flattop Island for Mackay. In a sailing vessel one had a much better chance of observing the glories of these isles—one lengthened line of loveliness, splendid in form and colour, laved by green waves, with the turquoise sky of Australia overhead. Why not stock them with goats

after the cocoanut trees have attained maturity, and then turn the blacks into them?

Very beautiful this to the traveller, but an anxious time for a shipmaster. A strong current ran through Whitsunday Passage, and we were compelled to let go the "mudhook," and possess our souls with patience till a breeze sprang up. All the next day we were in Whitsunday Passage. I had seen this under every condition—at sunrise, and sunset, and under the rays of the full moon. I had travelled many thousands of miles since I last sat up, beguiling the time with "Nap," to see the dawn break there. Yet, after all my wanderings, Whitsunday Passage was to me as beautiful as ever. It is not every place which will stand the wear of time and mental comparison. The sun went down in a fiery glory, and I wondered what it was that I missed. Where were the blacks who at times came out in their canoes and traded fresh fish and good tortoise-shell for tobacco? Had they been improved off the face of the earth, or did they now fear the white man? Steamer after steamer passed us to the north and to the south. There were also a few sailing vessels, one of which, by her red-painted boats, was a Queensland labour trader. It turned out to be the *Ceara*, belonging to the owners of the *Lizzie*. Some of the boys on board knew this ship, and when they had gathered on the poop to give it a good yell, as a substitute for a cheer, I tempted them. "Any boy want go back, no want work along a Queensland, very good *Ceara* take him." There was a great deal of muttering and talk amongst themselves, but the unanimous verdict was, "No boy he want to go." This was satisfactory.

There was a regular transformation scene when the "Maries" were all dressed in the morning as we entered Cleveland Bay. They were gorgeous in their bright cotton gowns, which covered all their perfections and imperfections. They looked more womanly now and less like monkeys. The boys had on their blue pants and Crimean shirts. All were smart and happy, and eager to see the new land to which they were bound. There was considerable trouble amongst the younger lads in getting properly "fixed." The good-natured boatswain, "Mac," helped little Ambrym Bill and his brothers in turning out decently. Round Cape Cleveland, Townsville—the commercial centre of the future colony of "Carpentaria"—was in front of us, Mag-

netic Island away on the right. I have very many reminiscences of happy days spent yachting around and shooting at the latter place. There are few more beautiful spots in the world than Townsville as seen from the sea.

We had to wait some considerable time for the over-worked health officer to come on board. Dr. Ahearne and I were old acquaintances, and I particularly impressed on him that the fever case on board was not contagious. He made a searching examination of the rest as the names were called out from the Government Agent's list, Peter acting as master of the ceremonies. Dr. Ahearne took down the names of the smaller boys and refused to pass them, and the Malo dwarf was also objected to as not being physically competent. The Pentecost boy with the fever was then examined, and ordered to be sent to the hospital. The recruits as they trooped by the doctor showed at once if they were old hands or new chums. The former, who had been through this mill before, walked forward unconcernedly, and took their places in line. The latter sneaked by and hid themselves amongst their fellows. This examination was to them a serious thing—the first new ordeal to which they had to submit, and there was no saying what it might portend! I was not sorry the examination was soon over, and that then I had permission to go ashore. The boys raised a mighty yell as I left them. We had been fellow-passengers for thirty days, and I wished them every luck in their fields of labour, and hoped that the seeds of good which, in spite of a few drawbacks, I verily believed had been sown by their intercommunion on this trip, would bear good fruit.

There was another ceremony to be gone through before the boys could be landed. The assistant immigration agent at Townsville was supposed to make a personal inquiry into each case before giving his certificate to the Government Agent and the owners. But he was away in quarantine, so the collector of customs was asked to undertake the duty, and I suppose was "happy to oblige," although the police magistrate refused the job. This inspection, which took place on board the ship the day after I landed, was made in a very thorough manner. If a man or woman made any complaints every facility was given to bring these forward. Each boy who could speak English was asked as to the mode of his employment, and as to what he was engaged

for; those who could not speak English had some of their countrymen to translate. Peter was M.C. as usual, and produced each recruit, perhaps freshly primed with the answers. There was a laugh at his expense when one or two said, "Peter he speak me go work alonga house." It was by this time well known by all that their career was plantation work, but this was said for the purpose of "trying it on." The old hands knew that if they were put to housework it was only as a favour and a reward of good conduct. I daresay Peter might have spun them some recruiting sergeant's yarns, but they all knew what they had to do now, and only laughed at the joke on Peter, when they told "big fellow Government" of the "crammers" which, perhaps, they did not believe at the time.

It was decided that the little boys having big brothers with them might be passed. The dwarf was also considered worth his £6 a year, tucker and clothes, and £27 as passage-money out and home. However he would earn it I don't know. Then the division of the hands was made. Messrs. Traill Brothers, of Trebonne Plantation, on the Herbert River, had applied for seventy boys, and Mr. J. B. Lauredon, of the Johnstone, a French gentleman long resident in Victoria, had applied for one hundred boys. To the former forty-nine were allotted, to the latter seventy. Men and women from the same island were kept together. I was sorry, though, that my recruit Outon was sent away to the Johnstone, whilst the Sandwich boys—who, being also "missionary," were his friends—went to the Herbert. *Man-a-Wee-wee* and the Pentecost boys went to Mr. Lauredon's; the Ambrym mob of young lads to Messrs. Traill's. They were not ashore at all in Townsville, and, if poor Outon's mate Nangaree was working there, it was a question whether they would ever meet. But I was sure, after my letter to Mr. Lauredon, he would, if he fulfilled my recommendation, be very well treated. There was a good deal of shouting and yelling, and really more feeling at parting from each other, than was evidenced at leaving their native shores. They were sorry to leave the *Lizzie*, too; and little N. and the baby cried bitterly at being separated from their nurses and playmates of both sexes. Two little Evas with a hundred Uncle Toms and male Topsies! The latter off to their field of labour, where they would toil for the "three yam" of their indenture.

# CHAPTER XXXII.

## TO NEW GUINEA.

PAPUA until 1883 was a mere geographical term to me. My mind was thoroughly unbiassed respecting it, as I had not even read any book of travels relating to the "dark island." I knew, however, a swarthy, passionate, handsome, athletic Roman, a hero after Ouida's own heart, who looked a man every inch of him. No laggard was D'Albertis, but a "masher" of the first order. Then I met at Charters Towers a Cornish miner, a member of one of the first prospecting parties to New Guinea. I saw a chest of beautiful birds' skins which he had collected, and he disabused my mind of the idea that the natives were bloodthirsty savages. I heard that although they might be cannibals among themselves, the diggers had everywhere found them friendly, but that the climate was deadly. But if I knew little of Papua, I knew a good deal of the question of annexation. Years ago Sir Arthur Kennedy had talked over the matter with me. He was then strongly impressed with the necessity of New Guinea being added to the British dominions, to prevent its absorption by a foreign Power, or its becoming the home of foreign adventurers. In any case the danger to Queensland and Australia would be imminent. Of what Sir Arthur said to me, of what the Premier, Sir Thomas M'Ilwraith, said to me, there was much that was necessarily private; but this much is public—there had been long correspondence with the Home authorities, the matter of annexation had been strongly urged by the Premier and the Governor, and there seemed to them an implied admission that "the flag might be put up" temporarily by Queensland as a precautionary measure, the merits of the case to be argued afterwards. The standard of England was to act as a scarecrow to foreigners. Sir Thomas, in thus attempting to force the hand of the Colonial Office, only did what the Governor of New Caledonia has since done in the New Hebrides.

I started for New Guinea at twelve hours' notice. Whilst I

had been in New Caledonia and the New Hebrides, Captain Armit, in command of an expedition despatched by the proprietors of the *Argus*, had attempted to cross New Guinea, but failed in this, as Mr. Forbes has since failed. Captain Armit, I believe, went as far inland as any white man, with the exception, perhaps, of the Rev. James Chalmers, and his letters to the Australian press were very valuable and interesting. Captain Armit would, I think, have succeeded but that he was prostrated with fever. That well-known scientist, Professor Denton, who accompanied the expedition, died, and was buried on the slopes of Mount Owen Stanley. My *confrère* returned to Australia invalided, and I was called upon to proceed to Port Moresby to take charge of the expedition, and to ascertain if there would be any chance of continuing the exploration at that season of the year. I took passage from Townsville along the coast of Carpentaria to Cooktown, and caught there a British India mail steamer, which landed me at Thursday Island, where I obtained a sailing vessel to Port Moresby. Off Cape York, the northernmost extremity of Australia, there is an archipelago—a network of islands. The houses which are dotted here and there upon these are the head-quarters of the pearl-fishers. Anchored off the depôts the traveller will see many small craft. Port Kennedy is a land-locked basin. formed by Prince of Wales's Island and Thursday Island—the latter the site of the settlement, a busy, prosperous township, a depôt for the trade of the Gulf of Carpentaria, and at the present time the head-quarters of the Hon. John Douglas, C.M.G., High Commissioner for New Guinea. Space forbids my referring to the pearl-fishing trade, which now, be it said, has principally migrated to Western Australia, or to the many strange types of character to be seen amongst the different races who are to be found in Torres Straits.

This Thursday Island is one of the healthiest places I know of within the tropics, and the coolest place I know of in the same latitude. I have felt the heat more at Brisbane and Rockhampton. Certainly there one wore more clothes; in the former locality, pyjamas are full dress. Except in the rainy season, there is always a grand breeze blowing for several hours during the day and night. However hot the sun—and it deserves consideration—the pure wind counteracts the heat and makes the air refreshingly cool. There is no fever in the breeze on

this island, it is invigorating and health-giving; no miasma comes on its wings, but it fills your lungs with honest ozone, and promotes appetite. The New Guinea exploration which is commenced at Thursday Island has its compensations. But nature does not seem tropical there. It is only a rock sliced off Australia. Walk along the beach, and it seems very uninteresting after the islands of the South Seas. Stunted eucalypti and mangroves are all one sees. The nests of the white ants are mammoth in their proportions, and fluted and buttressed; but you see just the same in Queensland. I rather despised nature in Thursday Island until I climbed the highest peak of the range, which gradually ascends from the beach on the eastern shore. From the top one has a view as supremely beautiful as anything in the world. It is a stony walk, and rough to tender feet. Stones and broken bottles, cairns and pyramids of the latter, erected by the gigantic efforts of the early pioneer, seem to a casual observer the principal products of Thursday Island. But the view from the summit is worth any effort. All round, the archipelago of the straits is visible—in beauty of outline unsurpassed—island gems set on the face of the deep, which here is as opal, reflecting the many hues of the coral reefs beneath. The sky above is turquoise. There is a faint, dreamy hum of insects in the air. To the west, Hammond Island and the little islet of Waiwea; beyond these, Goode Island. To the north, Friday Island. On their wooded shores white houses gleam in the sun. Many vessels are at anchor around these stations. In the narrow passage which separates us from Hammond Island a schooner's white wings skim the waters. Away at my feet is a long range of park-like land covered with gum-trees. Everything is green and beautiful to the eye. It is a view I am content to sit down and study, and let the peaceful influences sink into my soul.

Turning round, the settlement is below—the "Residency," the "parade" with its few sprouting cocoanut-trees, the store, and hotels. The steamers and schooners at anchor give one the idea that this is a great port. The white mission-boat, *Ellangowan*, shows out prominently. Beyond the harbour are Prince of Wales and Horn Islands, and in the distance the hazy outline of Cape York. There is apparently not a ripple on the waters, although there is a cool breeze on the heights. But boats come

sailing down with the current at a rate I have never seen surpassed; they are beautiful as they race along with their white wings fluttering. Many of these boats are built like yachts—some in China, others in Sydney. On this side, too, one sees many stations scattered around the islands. All the beauties of outline, light, shade, and colour are around me here. What a grand privilege to have been the first white man to view this group of land-locked gems of ocean, each a perfect lake! Torres sailed around Goode Island and Prince of Wales Island. Cook went to the south between Cape York and Horn Island. Did any of their company climb one of these hills and see the glories of the archipelago of which Thursday Island is the centre? But I reaped the result of their labours in the delight of the eye and worship of the soul with which I was inspired.

At Thursday Island I was lucky enough to meet Dr. Jee, a roving and sporting *medico*, whom I enlisted in the expedition. We started in the little schooner-yacht *Elsea*, belonging to Messrs. Burn, Philps, and Co., having as *compagnons de voyage* a scientific gentleman whom I christened "the Professor," and one or two new chums who were rushing over to New Guinea to find gold, buy land, or, in fact, in any possible way advance their fortunes. Torres Straits is a part of the world about which one might write a most interesting book. Very little is known even of the mainland of the Australian continent, at this point. Mr. Jardine, of Somerset, is the only man who has attempted to explore it. The natives here are savage and bloodthirsty cannibals, of a type distinct from the Australian aborigine, and also distinct from the Papuan. There appears to have been a considerable mixture of races in the Straits. From the Melanesian, the Malaysian, the Australian, and Papuan, some tribes have been evolved whom the white traders call "Bingeyes." Darnley is the largest and most interesting island between Torres Straits and New Guinea; but we only saw it afar off.

One afternoon we bore up to a small island, well wooded, with a long narrow sandspit joining it to another patch of land—a reef all around. This was "Matcheek," or York Island, and was the site of a *bêche-de-mer* station "run" by one "Yankee Ned." A collection of houses was visible on the beach. The anchor was dropped, the boat got out, and we started for the shore, the new chums rowing. Our costume was a light and easy one of

pyjamas and slippers. The doctor, however, sported shooting boots and a cartridge belt, and carried his breechloader. We stuck on a reef at a distance from the shore. Some women ran away at our approach. They had all decent cotton dresses. There was an iron shed for drying the trepang, several grass dwellings, a good boathouse, fowls in plenty, a number of large turtle-shells, and a monkey on a pole, who retreated to his den and swore at us. This was evidently a flourishing place, but as Captain Dubbins said, any one who doesn't mind roughing it can make a living in the Straits and islands in the Gulf. The waters supply food in fish, turtle, and dugong; pigeons also are plentiful in some seasons. A very little exertion in watching a few natives cure *bêche-de-mer* will provide flour, tobacco, and whisky for yourself, and "trade" to pay them with. And so the beach-comber lives, forgetting all the world, except the boat which brings his supply of grog.

There were two or three blacks sitting around here, but where was Yankee Ned, the presiding genius of the place? A white man emerged from the largest grass house; this was not Yankee Ned, but his *locum tenens*. Ned had gone to Thursday Island with dried fish. This man was the type of a beach-comber, one given up for years to the curse of drink. He was shaky and tremulous. He did not advance to meet our party, or manifest any curiosity or interest as to who we were. Clad only in a shirt and pants, and with dirty bare feet, he stood at the door, and with blear eyes nodded stupidly in response to our greetings. "There ain't anything to drink here," said he at last. Then I produced a recent copy of *The Australasian*, and handed it to him. He took it, and looked at it vacuously. Then I showed the bottle of grog we had brought to propitiate the guardian of this isle. A flash of intelligence and a fond look at the whisky. "Come in," said the beach-comber. He produced a mug, and we drank solemnly. He said nothing more, but stared at us with a side glance of affection at the bottle. He evidently wished us gone; he was fearful we should take a second drink and consume all the spirit so dear to him.

The surroundings showed that Yankee Ned was of a much superior type to this man. The grass house was built like those in Eastern Polynesia. It was clean and well ventilated. Sandal-

wood chests, native spears, and masks were the principal articles of furniture. We would have traded for the latter, but the beach-comber said, "They ain't mine." He looked at the bottle of grog at the same time, and I think, if we had had more, would have sold everything belonging to Ned in the place. We asked if we could get some cocoanuts, and with a sigh of relief the beach-comber informed us we should find some on the other side of the island. This would get rid of us, and he would be alone with the whisky.

We started on a track through the bush, but Dr. Jee and the Professor went round the beach — the former ready to kill any stray lion or tiger which might come across his path, the latter on the look-out for any strange weed or shell. Captain Dubbins led the way along a well-beaten path. The scrub was thick. Some of the trees were of great size. The *flora* was altogether tropical, not at all Australian. This was a coral island, but a few feet at its highest point above the level of the waves, but for generations it had been the haunt of sea and land birds, and of a small tribe of natives. After a walk of half a mile we came to the sea again. Here there was a small native village, the round huts clustered about one large square-built house in the centre of a clump of cocoa-nut palms. Captain Dubbins—who knew this island, as he did every place in the Gulf—told us this was the house of the native missionary. We entered. It was a fair-sized grass building, which, in the New Hebrides, would have been a first-class school or church. Here it served as a house of prayer as well as the residence of the pastor.

A venerable old man received us, and shook hands cordially. Two more venerable old men, two little boys, and one old woman were squatted on the mats on the floor. They were all clothed, and neat and respectable in appearance. I asked if this was the native missionary, but found that the London Society had abandoned this as a station, removing the teacher from Eastern Polynesia who had been here for some time. His post had been jumped by this elder, who had self-ordained himself spiritual leader as well as chief of the tribe. Church and State were joined together here, as they have been in all primal societies before and since Melchisedec. The pastor had a book in his hand, and two others were on the settee

by his side. I examined them. There was the "Gospel of Mark translated into the Murray Island dialect," and a hymn-book and primer in the same language, printed by Foster and Fairfax, of Sydney. These were the work of Mr. Macfarlane, who had taken the Murray Island dialect as the vehicle in which to promulgate the Gospel amongst the Bingeyes in the Straits and Gulf. As in the New Hebrides, the question arises, what good is all this trouble for a mere handful of people who will soon die out? Cannot Protestant missionaries convert by preaching, prayer, and work, as the Roman Catholics do, without devoting so much time to preserving a dialect which in a few years will be no more? The Gospel of Mark which I saw would in twenty years be a curiosity of literature.

This much may be said for the work of Mr. Macfarlane and the Christian natives who taught on York Island. The people there were, to an extent, civilised. They were clean, decent, respectful, and courteous; there was a pleasing contrast in their manner towards strangers to that of the converted natives of Aneitium, where the New Hebrides mission rules supreme. Civilisation doubtless means a great deal more than the possession of a shirt, but sacred and profane history alike agree that the first evolution of man from his primal state was contemporaneous with the introduction of clothes. The men and women of Matcheek have learnt the value of garments, and they obtain the same by work, catching and curing *bêche-de-mer* either for Yankee Ned, or on their own account, to barter with any stray trader.

We went round the village, which consisted of some half-dozen grass houses. Two kinds of architecture were to be seen —square, like the school-house, an idea imported by the missionaries; and round with beehive roofs. The buildings were all much better than the ordinary run of dwellings in the New Hebrides. Two or three had high enclosed corrals at the back, private courts, which I do not remember to have seen anywhere else in the South Seas except in New Caledonia. I thought of five years before, when I visited the great village of Jelima with Commandant Servan and his officers, and how we, making our way through the houses, intruded into the back-yards, where wives and maidens were congregated to talk scandal. How those dusky beauties flirted with us and emptied my pockets of cigars,

of which, no doubt, they were relieved by their fathers and husbands when we left! On Thursday Island these courts were, perhaps, even nicer than those near Canala, for the floor was of fine white sand. One was more public than the rest, and there was a gathering of many of the inhabitants under a shed or *gunyah* at the end. Men, women, and children were lying on the sand, as at a common meeting-place. A strong, healthy lot, these Bingeyes, with the exception of one man, evidently consumptive, who was coughing badly. His wife was boiling him some tea in a little pannikin: as in France, this herb was evidently considered to be a medicine. The total population of the village was not over forty. All the women and girls had decent gowns, the men pants and shirts, the young boys calico *sulus*. There was a lack of young able-bodied men and of female children. Amongst this handful of natives there appeared more civilisation than anywhere west of Fiji. What a striking contrast between them and the beach-comber on the other side of the island! The origin of species, and the descent of man!

There seems plenty of food on the islands in the Gulf, taking Matcheek as an example. We saw baskets of wild plums, which tasted like English sloes; dried turtle and dugong flesh on forked sticks; *bêche-de-mer* and turtle-eggs in abundance. I do not suppose the natives eat the dried trepang, as it is more valuable to them as an article of trade; but turtle-eggs are a nourishing luxury. Our new chums tasted these for the first time here. There were some wells of fresh water on York Island, but around the village enormous clam-shells were used as reservoirs. On the shore there were some very fine canoes, of great length, beautifully carved at the bow and stern, decorated with tortoise-shell, volutes, and other elegant spoils of the ocean. They had also streamers of human hair. These canoes had small outriggers on each side, and in this the art of the Solomon Islanders was displayed. But a day's steam from the coast of Australia, and we were amongst a people entirely distinct in their customs and traditions from our black fellows. Night was falling, so we retraced our steps, much pleased with our visit to this native village. Before embarking, I looked in to say good-bye to the beach-comber. He was sitting on the stretcher, looking vacantly at the empty bottle on the table. "There ain't no liquor here," said he; "when Ned comes back he'll bring some." I believe, however, that he

had a private store. Recognising me, he smiled amiably. "Come and see us again," said the man, with a side glance at the bottle, which suggested that one need not come empty-handed.

Early next morning up anchor and away. In the grey dawn I saw the figure of the beach-comber on the shore. He loomed up through the mist, shadowy and gigantic, a drunken, dissipated South Sea Rip Van Winkle, an empty bottle in his hand, and he seemed to shout the appeal, "Come and see us again, and I will drink your good healths," etc. The next night we were clear of all reefs and islands. We had left Bramble Cay to the left, and were out in the open sea. In the afternoon we "picked up" the land, but had to bear off to avoid dangerous currents at night. At daybreak on the sixth day out from Thursday Island the coast of New Guinea gladdened our eyes—that mysterious "dark island," which since its discovery by the Portuguese more than three centuries and a half ago, has remained to this day a *terra incognita* to the rest of the world. For the coast has only been partially surveyed, a few rivers ascended, and a few days' journey made inland. But the interiors of Mallicolo and Espiritu Santo, in the New Hebrides, are equally unknown: each of these is as large as Vanua Levu, in Fiji, and may be equally productive. The vastness of New Guinea, however, makes it an attractive field for the traveller. As in our youth we believed in the African Mountains of the Moon, and the strange races which lived beyond them, so in New Guinea, the unknown land, we are ready to admit that great marvels and wonders may be hidden in the midst of its vast mountains. First we saw the low foot-hills, then a higher range with a peculiar jagged outline. There is one strange peak which mariners can never mistake; sharp and pointed, it well deserves its name of Wedge Hill. The morning fogs rose, and as the lower eminences became plainly visible, far in the clouds we saw the summits of the mountain range. Towering above all, thirty miles inland, is Mount Yule, over 10,000 feet high, the northern Boaz of the chain of which Mount Owen Stanley is the Jachin on the south-east. Sailing along the coast, with the sun shining on the cloud-capped monarchs whose summits alone were visible, one was reminded of the South American and Mexican coasts; the

only difference was that these mountains were not crowned with snow.

By noon we were within a very few miles of the land. At this point New Guinea has one of the most lovely and promising coast-lines which I know. The foot-hills range inwards, environing fertile valleys. The uplands are clothed with verdure. With the high mountain range beyond we may be sure that this district is well watered. As we sailed along the great range was hidden from view. The coast-line was only from 500 to 600 feet high, and the green hills had a gentle slope. There was nothing forbidding; rather, nature is inviting here. It reminded me of the north-west coast of Tanna, or of some parts of Japan. As far as the eye could reach the land sloped to the south-east and north-west. There were indentations, estuaries, bights, and unknown rivers, whose mouths were only just marked on the chart. It was one of these which Mr. Chalmers recently ascended and saw strange wonders. And from these came the great trunks of trees which floated past us, showing the terrific force of the mountain torrents which had swept them into the sea. Within a mile of the land we coasted along a bight. For ten miles on the shore there was a narrow strip of cocoanut grove. Some trees were very tall, others younger. There was one large village, and through the glasses we could see good square-built grass houses, with doors and windows in the European style. The smoke which rose inland showed that here there was a great population. With the quantity of cocoanuts which there is, a good trade should be done in copra. We were now in Hall Bay, and close to Yule Island, which, as night was coming on, we had to stand out to sea to avoid.

Yule Island, or Roro, is where Signor D'Albertis in 1875 lived alone for eight months, making many excursions into the mainland, reporting that in the fertile valleys and broad flats extending to the foot of Mount Yule, the villages were numerous and populous, the manners and customs of the natives gentle, they living "in a state of comparative well-being and happiness." In spite of this, however, the intrepid Italian got into trouble with the tribes around him, and lived for weeks at war with them, the black flag floating over his house, announcing that they were tabooed approaching it. But Signor

D'Albertis never came into collision with the natives on account of his presumed supernatural powers. The Papuans had not the courage to test these as the Hawaiians did the presumed spiritual attributes of Captain Cook, or as the Fijians tested the powers of the Rev. Mr. Baker, the only missionary killed there. This gentleman owed his fate to his own folly. With some Christian natives belonging to Bau, he journeyed into the centre of Viti Levu, and paid a visit to a chief, a bitter enemy of Thakambau. He preached to the heathen, and dared the chief to harm him, as he was specially protected by the Divine power. As, however, they had only his word for it, the next morning the chief "saw" him. "If we cannot hurt him, what harm a blow of the club? If it does knock out his brains, it proves he is a liar, and deserves death." Thus the chief reasoned: so the missionary was ignominiously clubbed, and afterwards eaten. I had given to me in Fiji a wooden fork, which I was credibly informed assisted at this feast. These prongs are only used for human flesh, and descend as precious heirlooms in a family.

Signor D'Albertis was, however, very lucky in escaping as he did, for the American naturalist, Dr. James, and his companion, Karl Thorngreen, a Swede, who took up their residence on Yule Island after the Italian explorer left, were murdered only a few months afterwards on the mainland —murdered, according to all accounts, without any provocation. But like the Tannaman, the native of New Guinea, I am informed, sometimes takes offence at trifles, and then he is "sudden and quick in quarrel." He regrets, perhaps, just as quickly; the consensus of opinion of all travellers being that New Guinea natives are not naturally bloodthirsty like the inhabitants of New Britain, New Ireland, the Solomons, and the New Hebrides. In comparison with the Western Pacific Islanders they have, in manner at least, attained a stage of civilisation.

There was a calm next morning. In the afternoon a light breeze bore us across Redscar Bay. The Manu Manu (meaning "Bird" River) flows into the foot of this bay. We beat past three strange-looking rocks called "the Skittles," and whilst standing out again, sailed over a sunken reef, where the water was much broken. Here we saw as wonderful a sight as has

ever startled my eyes in many long years of "going down to the sea in ships." It was a marvel equal to the school of whales in amorous dalliance which I saw in the Northern Pacific two years before. Near the equator nature assumes large proportions, and the imaginations of travellers sometimes also get enlarged. No one believes in Captain Lawson; but other travellers have recounted the existence in New Guinea of a great bird which measures twenty feet across the wings, and can take up a dugong in its claws. Certainly, no white man is bold enough to come forward and say he has seen it; but it is a well-defined tradition amongst the natives. It may not be an impossibility. At all events, a school of sharks twenty-five to forty feet long now surrounded us! There was no mistake about this. We all saw them. On this afternoon of Thursday, the 29th November, there was a cry of "Whales on the port side!" "Black fish," said the captain. This small species of *Cetacea* was held to be fair sport by some of our number. "Bring up the Sniders!" was the cry. But I stood at the head of the cabin stairs, and argued on the barbarity of injuring these huge but harmless fish. I have often been accused in my life of being hard and cruel. When it is necessary to shed blood, I do it without compunction; but the shooting of sea-gulls and porpoises as "sport" is a thing always abhorrent to me. I prevailed in this instance. The fish came nearer. "By heavens! they're big 'uns," said Captain Dubbins. Several fins and huge backs were seen above the water. One monster bore down to the ship. Jean, the cook, who had climbed into the rigging, called out "Shark!" We scoffed at him. The fish came right underneath the bows, and then floated quietly astern on the top of the water. We could have touched him with our hands by leaning over the bulwarks. By Jove! Jean was correct. This was a shark—an enormous mottled brute, which seemed as large as our ship. He turned partly over, and showed his frightful jaws, which would have taken in a man whole. He was, by the computation of the captain and all hands, at least forty feet long, with a six-foot "beam."

We looked with horror at this scourge of the sea, and then there was a quick rush for the Sniders below. The sharks were all around, not one of them apparently under twenty-five or thirty feet long. The boomer appeared to lead them, and they swam around us both to port and starboard.

It almost seemed as if they meant to attack the ship. Some one suggested getting out a hook and line, but Captain Dubbins derided this proposal. "If we had a hook strong enough and a cable to it, that beggar would tow us away or capsize us," said he. In the *Chow-chow* water, with the *Elsea* dancing about, it was very hard to take sure aim. The bullets ricocheted off the brute's back. Again we fired, and there was no mistake, we hit him this time, but he only wagged his tail. Shot after shot was fired without much apparent effect. When we reached the smooth water the sharks would not follow us, but turned back to their particular *habitat* over the sunken reef.

These were specimens of the Great Basking Shark—*Solache maxima*. They are reputed, like the whale, to have a very small gullet, but they have enormous jaws and teeth, which look as if meant for business. They could halve a man easily—when it would not much matter to him if they ate him or not. I have only previously heard of this enormous cetacean off the coast of Japan. There they are harpooned like whales, being caught for their livers, which will give, I have been told, as much as two tons of oil each. This oil, I was also informed, finds its way to Europe as the "best cod-liver." It may be equally good as a medicinal tonic.

I would very much have liked to secure the boomer as a specimen for the Melbourne Museum, but without harpoons we were helpless. But after this sight I was prepared to believe in New Guinea as a country of great surprises. I could even imagine the existence of the monster bird. We talked nothing but shark at night, but no yarns which we remembered could beat the reality we saw in the day. We all dreamed of mighty monsters, and awoke in the morning to find ourselves off Port Moresby; Mount Owen Stanley, 13,500 feet high, towering in the clouds beyond. It was many hours, however, before we rounded the low sandy patch known as Fisherman Island, and made the entrance to the port. Then the discomforts of the voyage were forgotten as we set foot on the shores of New Guinea.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### PORT MORESBY.

FROM the point north of Hall Bay, where we first struck the New Guinea coast, to Port Moresby, there was a considerable change in the appearance of the country. The high mountains and luxuriant tropical bush, with the foot-hills covered with verdure, and fertile valleys running inland, were succeeded by long stretches of mangrove forest along the shore, which at low tide gave forth most noxious exhalations. Beyond the region of mangroves, the hills on the coast-line were in the south more scantily wooded, the tropical character of the country had disappeared, until at Port Moresby we found nothing but an Australian scene. The foliage was barren and scanty; the trees were all the everlasting eucalyptus. New Guinea, like New Caledonia, was by this token at one time part of Australia. In this respect Port Moresby is very disappointing. These bare limestone hills with a plentiful crop of rocks and stones depressed me. The mournful gum-tree I certainly did not hail with delight.

An excellent harbour, however, this Port Moresby. The hills surround it on every side; there is hardly a patch of level land to be seen. The scenery has the beauty of outline, if not of colour and vegetation. There was a small fringe of cocoanut-trees beyond a native village, and in the slopes there were cultivated patches where bananas were grown. These, fenced off at different places all around the bay, gave one the idea that eligible building sites had been pegged out for future settlers. The population was on the western side of the harbour. On the brow of a hill a row of houses with broad verandahs and iron roofs stood out quite imposingly. This was the mission station. There were some grass houses near belonging to the faithful amongst the natives. The largest building was the church. Lower down near the beach was a smaller iron house; this was Mr. Goldie's store. Half a mile south, on the slope of the hill,

was another small iron house; this was the *Argus* camp. Along the shore the houses of the natives were built on piles six feet to twelve feet high, over the water: at least, at high tide they were completely surrounded. There were three distinct villages around Port Moresby: one on a small rocky islet, Ilivara, between which and the mainland women and children were wading; another, Tanapata, at the foot of the Mission Hill; and the third, Anuapata, between that and the Argus Hill.

The minute we landed I found that I was with the naked savage once more. He was more naked than I had ever seen him in the South Seas. His nudity was, to a stranger, abominable and offensive. He was worse than the Canaque of New Caledonia, or the Tannaman. A tape a quarter of an inch broad was the only thing in the way of dress which he considered to be essential. The women wore small grass skirts. They were tattooed in corkscrew lines from their brows and necks downward out of sight. But the young female children were absolutely nude. The fresco-work did not strike me as being very beautiful. The natives coming down the range which encircles Port Moresby were far more interesting to me. They were naked, certainly, but the spoils of the chase which they carried would, no doubt, be a novelty. As the party came nearer I saw that they had spears and nets, and that the dead game was some large animal. A young deer or antelope? Another revelation! It was a small kangaroo, the same sad, dreary, grass-eating marsupial which is met with all over Australia, and which is the largest land animal found in New Guinea. The cassowary is the largest bird, but it also inhabits Northern Queensland and New Britain. Except in the matter of paradise birds, the *fauna* of New Guinea is little superior to that of Australia—that is, as far as is yet known. The traveller who first sees the mammoth bird carrying away a dugong, or the Great Cat—a panther—which the natives say lives far inland, will have something to write about.

We strolled along the village of Anuapata to the *Argus* camp. The beach was the main street. There was a scanty line of cocoanut-trees on one side, the houses and the sea on the other. The residences perched up aloft over the water were of the square hayrick pattern. They were thatched on roof and sides with the leaves of the screw pine, the fronds of the cocoanut,

and tough grass. The floors were solid, composed of thick boards, the holes in the edges of which puzzled me for a time till I saw that they were the sides of old canoes. An economical people, these Motus; at least, economical where exertion of labour was required. The houses were, perhaps, twenty to thirty feet long, and ten to fifteen feet wide. The front was inlaid. A foot or two below the level of the floor there was a platform with an arched porch over it, where the ladies of the village sat and received calls. We gained access to the porch of one chief's house by a very rickety and primitive ladder. Naturally, we afterwards penetrated into the house. Inside there was smoke and very little else except a few spears and nets. There was plenty of ventilation through the open floors. We did not rub noses, but shook hands with old and young, and patted the babies.

When it was understood that our intentions were amicable we were besieged with cries of "*Kuku*," "*Kuku tina*." *Kuku* means tobacco. I commenced giving this away, and kept at it all the time I was in New Guinea. Canoes were drawn up high and dry across the street, though some were moored to the poles which supported the houses. From the back-doors these people could thus escape to the sea if attacked from the land. There were numerous pigs running about the street, and a number of snarling curs, which did not bark, and had also, I think, little bite in their nature. I laughed and chatted with every native I met, old and young. Only the babies cried when they saw me. These people, who did not understand one word of English, knew very well we were friendly to them, and laughed in return at my jokes. But they always ended with *kuku*, and they got it: I had made up my mind that I would not stay in Port Moresby very long, and could launch out into extravagances in giving *largesse* in the shape of inches of twist. We passed several graves on the beach; people were buried for a time opposite their own doors, and then their skeletons and skulls were preserved. In the open village street a number of women were busy making pottery. It was on this manufacture that Port Moresby lived. It was the Stoke, Hanley, and Burslem of New Guinea. The crockery assumed the form of "chatties," *uras*, open pots for cooking in, and *hordus* for water-carrying. The women were the only workers. The clay, of a slate colour, was brought from

a distance; it was puddled in a trough, and deftly worked on moulds, and then baked in a fire in the open street. We saw pottery-making in all its stages as we strolled along. Every time we stopped to admire and to criticise there was an outstretched hand, and one cry, "*Kuku.*"

The Papuan has no idea of art in ceramic ware. Personally, he is fond of colour. Nature leads him to be so. The gorgeous-hued birds of paradise set him an example, which he follows by decking himself with head-dresses and gorgets of bright feathers. Some of the feather-work brought by the *Argus* expedition from afar over the Astrolabe ranges is most beautiful, and displays a great deal of patience and taste in the manufacture. With all the natives a paradise bird is considered an article of great value. Ten skins of the *Paradisea Raggiani* are part of the price of a wife; to this must be added a necklace of dogs' teeth or crocodiles' teeth. These latter, of course, are very scarce, but the dogs' teeth are considered the most valuable. After his decorations of brilliant feathers, the New Guinea buck, like ladies on and off the stage, goes largely into paint. For mourning he blackens himself all over, thus showing that he considers the display of colours to be his greatest attraction. When any one particularly near and dear is departed, the Papuan not only sports the signs of woe himself, but puts his house in mourning by blackening the walls inside.

The Argus Hill was quite clear from the village, our camp being on the bluff lying south of it—a very pleasant camp indeed. From this hill the view at eventide was lovely. The setting sun toned down all the rough outlines of the hills, the waters of the bay had hardly a ripple on their surface. Looking north-eastward, the range cast a protecting shadow. Looking westward to Oku and Lololoa, there was the beauty of light and colour from the dying sun, which crimsoned the waters of the open sea to the south. A calm, peaceful, still place, this—one in which to live happily. Yet it was hither that Captain Armit and his companions were borne helpless, stricken down with the fever, which is the death a white man has to fear in New Guinea.

At night we slept with all the doors and windows open. There was a deliciously cool breeze, and the light dew which fell outside was not sufficient to cause miasma in this well-drained spot. Not since I left New Zealand had I enjoyed

such a sound sleep. Port Moresby seemed to me to be infinitely superior as a location to any place in the islands of the Western Pacific. I sank to rest looking on the sky, in which the new moon formed a golden crescent, faintly silvering the waves in the west. The villages had been silent since sundown, and the only night cries were the yelping of a few curs. Sound and healthy was my first sleep, but, like every old traveller, I awoke at an unaccustomed noise. Nearer and nearer came the cries and howls. For a moment I thought I was on the prairies once more, and a pack of coyotes were prowling round the camp. Then I recognised that it was a mob of dingoes hunting some unhappy marsupial over the ranges. Australian again! There was a chirping of some night bird, and a chuckling sound from a small species of iguana, which, being a flycatcher, was encouraged about the house, and ran round promiscuously at night. But what was that strange roaring down on the beach? It was a crocodile, I was told. With such vermin around, no wonder the people of New Guinea built their houses on piles. A crocodile sporting in the mangroves within a rifle-shot below us was an experience decidedly not Australian, and I went off to sleep contented at finding something novel at last.

At 2 a.m. I again suddenly awoke. There was such a confusion of tongues in Anuapata that one would think the people had arisen to drive out the foreigners, or that "domestic fury and fierce civil strife" reigned among them. It appeared, however, that this was the general custom at Port Moresby. The Motus went to bed at sundown, and awoke thus early, probably from the cold, for I was glad enough to wrap my blanket round me. The natives replenished the fires inside their houses, and in the porches or verandahs, and then they talked to and at each other with a volubility only excelled by colonial Members of Parliament. But they did not venture abroad till dawn. When the first grey glimmerings appeared in the east we arose and stretched our legs, and the doctor proposed a swim in the briny below. He was told, however, of the crocodile, which a day or two before had seized a dog, and was then waiting for such a toothsome morsel as the Englishman would be. But, for a dozen inches of twist tobacco, a dozen men and boys fetched from the spring, half a mile away, a dozen *hordus* of cool fresh

water. Poured over our heads this was far more refreshing than the sea. Labour was cheap when, for the sixteenth of an ounce of tobacco, you could get a bucket of water brought to your door. I found, however, that the *Argus* expedition had already had a tendency to raise prices. Never had there been such wealth distributed in Port Moresby as that which had been dispersed from our camp. Here, and everywhere in New Guinea, the natives had been well paid and liberally treated, and any one camping on Argus Hill was sure to be looked upon with respect. The small piece of ground which we used, was leased from the chief of Anuapata by payment of a hatchet and some tobacco, he guaranteeing to the *Argus* expedition quiet and peaceful possession as long as we were in occupation. But, leasehold or freehold, we had not much longer any need of the *Argus* camp, for I determined to break up the expedition at once. The rains were daily expected, and with the summer monsoons all communication with Australia would be stopped for three or four months. The *Elsea* was the last chance of returning to the colonies, and I intended to go back in her.

I took an early morning walk across the hill-side to confer with Mr. Goldie and Captain Dubbins on business matters, and surprised a troop of young barbarians at play. They ran away from me at first, perhaps scared by my red *sulu*, but we very soon entered into friendly relations. There was an upper track between Mission Hill and Argus Hill. Halfway between was a small patch with a reed fence around it. God's Acre here had already many white inmates—the majority being the diggers of '78. Should the Northern Queenslanders come again, I think they would be the real pioneers of New Guinea. The search for gold will do for this country what it did for California and Australia, and the end will be fulfilled in spite of the apathy of governments and politicians. I had not much time to meditate amongst the tombs, for the lads enticed me down to the village. As we descended to the beach we passed men and women bound to the hills or over the range. The women all had nets, which they carried on their backs, suspended from their foreheads. They were going to get mangoes, bananas, or firewood, and could convey great weights in this manner. The men carried spears, bows and arrows, and larger nets. They were after kangaroo

or wallaby, which they stalked and drove into the nets placed in the grass. Women and men work equally hard here. Down on the beach the pottery-makers were already toiling. I was taken by the boys to their respective mammas and sisters, who were patting small pieces of clay into shape. They did not stop work, but they cried "*Kuku.*" I thought the boys had something particular to show me. It seemed, however, that they only looked upon me as a tobacco-distributing animal.

I wished the women were better-looking. I wished the men wore some clothing. Missionaries have scornfully said to me: "You would give a man a shirt, and call him civilised." My reply is, "No! I have seen that at Aneitium. But I certainly call a man a savage who has *not* got a shirt." I must say that if I had seen less of the Motu man or woman I might have liked them better. The babies, also, were too much for me. When the mothers had got all they could out of me, they sent for their infants, which were hung up in nets inside the houses, and these held out their hands instinctively. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings here came but one word—"*Kuku, kuku.*" The first thing a Motu child is taught is to beg, the second to steal. But little teaching is required—it is their nature to. The only thing which pleased me in Anuapata was the affection displayed by the men towards their children. They nursed their babies, and were evidently proud of having large families. Anuapata, Tanapata, and Ilivara need not be ashamed of meeting their enemies in the gates. The children which swarmed about showed there was not likely to be any decrease in the population of a thousand around Port Moresby.'

It is thirteen years since the first missionary landed at Port Moresby. It is twelve years since Mr. and Mrs. Lawes settled there. Three years after their advent Mr. and Mrs. Chalmers came to New Guinea, but were stationed on an island off South Cape, over 200 miles distant. The first mission residence was a small, inconvenient, weatherboard house, which would be despised by the poorest resident in Collingwood-flat. The present residence was a fair-sized building, with a good broad verandah all around, from whence there was a charming view of the bay, the waters of which were at this time of year often crowded with the sails of canoes—sometimes several being lashed together—which traded up and down the coast. These *lakatois* leave the villages around

Port Moresby laden with pottery, and return with sago, yam, and taro. This was the one place I had met with in my wanderings in the Pacific where manufacture and commerce were developed. The Motus, as I have before said, are born liars and thieves, but they, in spite (?) of such qualities, are splendid traders. Since the advent of the *Argus* expedition, tobacco had also become an article of commerce. The Motus do not consume much tobacco, although they smoke a good deal, and they had lately had such a large supply of *kuku* that they were enabled to barter it for food. Never had there been such an amount of yam, and sago, and betel-nuts in Anuapata and Tanapata as during the previous few months. Port Moresby was waxing fat; there was a rotundity about its epigastrium pleasing to the eye of travellers who, like Cæsar, love fat men, who sleep well of nights. Amongst savages I certainly preferred such to those who had a lean and hungry look—they were generally dangerous. Man, woman, and child around Port Moresby were well fed, and therefore amiable and contented, this frame of mind being considerably increased by the incessant chewing of the preparation of betel and lime which each man carried in a little gourd.

I was welcomed by the Rev. W. G. Lawes. I was not sorry that I waived ceremony and called on him. Mr. Lawes was the sort of man you took to at once; he had the look of a patient scholar, charitable to the failings of others. The Rev. James Chalmers, who joined us on the verandah, was quite a different type of man. He was wonderfully like Charles Dickens; there was the same bronzed face, the same brisk sailor-like smartness and energetic movements, the hair, beard, and moustache worn in the same manner. I think the author of "David Copperfield" would have rejoiced at meeting "Tamate," the name given by the natives to Mr. Chalmers. I found traces of the same individuality in both. Tamate was masterly and masterful; one who spoke strongly and wrote strongly. He was a good friend to the natives and a scorner of mean whites. Yet, withal, he had a liberal personal charity and breadth of view which pleased me. Neither Mr. Lawes nor Mr. Chalmers assumed in their dealings with, and conversation respecting, other white men, the I-am-holier-than-thou style affected by some missionaries I have known. Tamate was a born traveller, thoroughly fearless. I was at once made to feel at home with the missionaries here, and

we plunged into arguments in which there was a good deal of disagreement, but with the most perfect good temper and respect for each others' opinions. There are missionaries and missionaries. I would that all were of the type of Messrs. Lawes and Chalmers.

Accepting an invitation to dinner on the morrow, I left the mission residency for Mr. Goldie's store. A number of natives were gathered in the yard watching the white men inside. They were all naked. One old man disappeared on my approach, but he shortly returned clad in an old black alpaca coat, his only garment. Then he was introduced to me as Boe Vagi, the head chief of Anuapata, who was entrusted with the British flag after it had been first hoisted. Boe by this appeared to have been recognised as the native boss of Port Moresby; but, in reality, there was no supreme chief. There was simmering jealousy and rivalry between the villages, and the internal administration of each was more of the family than the tribe. But chiefs were elected for various offices, and old Boe was head man in Anuapata —a sort of mayor of the parish. This old alpaca coat was his robe of office. He was very proud of it, and only donned it on what he considered to be state occasions, or to receive distinguished visitors. But there were two other chiefs here to whom I was introduced, one of them being Ila, the venerable robber chief, who was at one time a cross between Ned Kelly and Captain Kidd. He was a pirate and a bush-ranger, the scourge of the coast. Ila means "tomahawk"—a very good name for a freebooter. He looked "as mild a mannered man as ever scuttled ship or cut a throat." Rather a fraud, this Ila, from the phrenologist's point of view. He had really a good expression for a savage; but his hair was grey, and he was bow-legged with old age. Ila, I was told, must be more than seventy years old. This span of life is seldom attained in New Guinea. Feeble and shaky now, with his occupation gone, Ila shook hands with me and insinuatingly said, "*Kuku.*" I dare say he speculated as to the desirability of the new order of things compared with the old. The era of peace brought missionaries, visitors, and plenty of *kuku*, which he begged at every opportunity. Ila, as well as the other chief, was naked; but they both had pearl-shell gorgets—articles of *vertu* and value in New Guinea. Ila once had a shirt, but Boe, who was supposed to be to some extent

Christianised, was the only one of the triumvirate who now sported any clothing.

There were some strange natives at Mr. Goldie's store, a party of Koiari from a village twenty miles away over the coast-range. That I should not be able to visit their country, or to see the wonderful Falls of the Laloki, was my greatest trouble. I should leave New Guinea without even seeing a *dubu*, which is not to be found on the sea-coast. These sentry-boxes and houses of refuge have been often described, but I do not think it is generally known that they also exist in the Solomons. These Koiari are of a distinct race from the Motu. They dress their hair in a different way, but are otherwise as undressed as the inhabitants of Port Moresby, from whom, however, they can be readily distinguished. The Koiari were very friendly, and with parties of the Koitapu often came and visited the mission residence and Mr. Goldie's store. They traded with the natives of Anuapata, giving yams and taro for the sago which the Motus had brought along the coast with their pottery. Port Moresby was the greatest mart in New Guinea. These Koiari dissipated at the port in big drinks of sea-water, and carried supplies home in bamboos. The greatest treat you can give them is salt. Through Mr. Goldie, I had a little talk with these mountaineers. They would be very willing, indeed, for me to visit their village, and would guide me and make me welcome. I had no doubt that they looked forward to more axes and knives and tobacco from the *Argus* expedition. They would sell me a piece of land, too, to form a camp with them for a time.

During my stay at Port Moresby I saw a great deal of the missionaries. Many amicable notes passed between the *Argus* camp and the Mission house. There were always a few of the Anuapata boys hanging around our camp, waiting a chance to steal something, or to do some slight chores not involving any great trouble or exertion. For half a farthing's worth of tobacco I could send a letter to Mr. Lawes or "Tamate." And my messengers would never return without a reply, but would sit down and wait—an occupation which they did not find distressing—until they got "paid" for the letter they had brought in the shape of a reply to me. The Motu had but one idea—nothing for nothing. So when I gave one of them a letter for Mr. Chalmers, he insisted on receiving one in return,

which he handed to me, and then received his honorarium of tobacco.

A high type of men are the missionaries belonging to the London Society. They have, I imagine, more charity towards "outsiders." I knew this before, from the records of the veteran Mr. Jones, of Maré, and of other missionaries in Eastern Polynesia. They do not think all white men except themselves unclean. Yet, for all that, Messrs. Lawes and Chalmers do not place the native and the white man on "the same level." The converted native is a higher product in their eyes. They were rather dubious as to the effects of the annexation to Queensland. It is true that Messrs. Lawes and Chalmers assisted at this ceremony, and at "putting up the flag," and that Mr. Lawes took a photograph of the proceedings, in which "Tamate" stands side by side with the Resident of Thursday Island, the centre being occupied by old Boe, who had been supplied with a clean pyjama jacket, much too large for him, for the interesting occasion. But with the prospect of explorers, and land selectors, and traders and diggers following the flag, the missionaries here rather repented of the proceedings. I must say I agreed with Mr. Chalmers, when he pointed out to me a drunken man staggering along the beach, followed by a crowd of Anuapata lads, laughing in glee at the erratic movements which the white man made on the sands. These boys could not understand it: they were not civilised, and had never seen their fathers come reeling home at night. They thought it a new kind of entertainment. My red *cummerbund* was always a source of great attraction to these boys. As the temporary chief of the *Argus* camp, which during the last few months had been such a mine of wealth to them, I was looked up to with respect; but I had never done anything so exquisitely funny as this drunkard's march along the sands. They enjoyed it wonderfully; and when the executant turned round and waved his arms violently, exclaiming, "'Sh! Will you now, really you know, will you go to——?" they laughed and applauded in a manner highly flattering to the white man. Tamate's lips were compressed. "That is a nice sight to convince the natives of the superiority of the white race! Don't you think we are justified in objecting to such men coming here?" said he.

Certainly such an example as this was very trying. The trial was greater, however, when some Europeans gave liquor to the natives. I hold it is a grievous fault for a white man to degrade his kind by getting drunk before savages; but it is a *crime* to supply the savages themselves with strong drink. The diggers, however, who landed in 1878, had as good and clean a record in their dealings with the natives as any body of adventurers in the world. There does not appear to have been any attempt amongst them to imbue the natives with a taste for liquor. But from the missionaries and Captain Dubbins I heard quite another account respecting the doings of a certain Russian scientist, whose passion for skull collecting, and the little respect he paid to the social customs of the natives, had caused in the districts where he resided a great prejudice against white men. It is rather humiliating to have to record the missionaries' statement, that any future troubles in New Guinea will be the result of the actions of men of education!

The work here has not been all rose-water. The climate is not elsewhere, inland or along the coast, of the refreshing character of Port Moresby. When I saw Mrs. Lawes suffering from severe attacks of fever, I recognised the hardship of her life. When I heard from others of the attacks made on Mr. Chalmers's station at the South-east Cape, of the Samoan teachers who had been poisoned, of the attempted "cutting out" of the mission schooner, the *Mayri*, when the captain was speared in four places and had his foot nearly chopped through, I recognised that considerable devotion to their cause had been exhibited by the pioneer missionaries in New Guinea. Mr. Chalmers had many times been in very great danger. Captain Dubbins told me how "Tamate" had often been the last to retreat to a boat, he, unarmed, facing a crowd of hostile savages. I hold it the highest testimony to the worth of these gentlemen settled here in Port Moresby, that Captain Dubbins, who was long in the employ of the London Missionary Society on board the *Ellangowan*, and who, from much sailing about with them, knew their characters thoroughly, should be their foremost champion. As a rule, missionaries are *not* heroes to the skippers and sailors belonging to the vessels of the different societies. All the weaknesses of human nature come out at sea. But honest Henry Dubbins, not a church member or a pious man, was

hearty in his ejaculation, "That's a lie, and you know it," to a man in Mr. Goldie's store who had said evil things of Mr. Chalmers. It is the testimony to individual character such as Captain Henry Dubbins bore when speaking of Messrs. Lawes and Chalmers, that I hold to be of greater value than that set forth in any missionary report. These gentlemen have maintained a high standard for their position and race, and their moral influence over the natives has alone been of advantage. The influence of a decent white man over savages is always very great, but it affects many of them very differently. I remember once at Tanna news came to Mr. Watt at Kwamera that the Aneitium teacher at Port Resolution was starving. There were no faithful to contribute to his support, and he had been too lazy to cultivate his own land, or had hoped, like most native teachers, to subsist in ease from the tribute of his flock. Gottfrey Kyhn and I promised to see into the matter, and sent for him. The biggest fool I ever met was this preacher; clad in a blue *sulu* and a flat black cap, he looked pensive and well fed. He could hardly understand a word of English, and took the biscuits and yams given him without a word of thanks. That same morning I talked to old Sarawa, the "wind-maker," about a man shot the day before. He knew English well, and with ghoulish look said, "If missionary no stop, I make *ki-ki* that fellow." Mr. Watt's presence in the district was sufficient to put down an act of cannibalism, even as the presence of the white missionaries in New Guinea had tended to put down acts of robbery and bloodshed which before frequently occurred.

It had been a hard task to get the youngsters to school. I believe the parents had to be bribed in many cases by small presents. Every morning the bell rang for matins at six o'clock. I never got across to the Mission Hill by this time. Although we were up before daybreak, still an hour was always wasted before the natives brought the *hordus* of cold water for our shower, and the nets of resinous, stringy, wild mangoes which I chewed for health's sake. But the daily school was not until eight o'clock, and I paid this a visit on two occasions. Walking along the track on the hill-side above the beach and village of Anuapata, I came on a mob of young boys playing with reed spears. In the Western Pacific children from the earliest age are brought up to play at taking life. Killing is no murder in New Guinea,

life is lightly held and lightly taken. These youngsters dashed their toy spears into the bushes and the grass, or threw them at each other, as in the chase or war, with yells of hatred and defiance. They had got to know me now, and clustered round me with appeals for *kuku*. Then they wanted to lead me down to the beach; but I had been "had" that way before. If I went to the Mission *viâ* the streets of Anuapata and Tanapata it would cost me about sixpennyworth of tobacco, besides loss of time and perchance of temper. On this upper road I was comparatively safe from blackmail. The lads and I conversed amicably in our separate mother-tongues. These natives were nearer to nature than to the product of my race, and I think they understood me as a dog would; that is, they knew that my intentions were friendly, and that I was speaking to them kindly. I played awhile with these young Motus, whom, however, in their superlative nakedness, I could not like as I did the young Tongans, with whom a few years back I had such jolly games on the cocoanut-fringed path leading from the back of Maafu's compound into the bush of Loma Loma. They, however, were quite civilised, and ran races and threw their *jereeds* at marks for the sixpences I gave them. The Motu boy did not understand money—tobacco, *kuku*, was his only thought. I told them they were all very bad lads for not being at school, and they assented to this. "*Eo!*" (Yes!) of Eastern Polynesia had come to be a form of affirmation here. "*Eo!*" they all said; and I led them, like the piper of Hamelin, past the graves where the white men lay in peace, up the rise at the back of Mr. Goldie's, towards the church, where the school was held. Then they stopped disgusted. I suppose they thought I was going to inaugurate some new kind of amusement, and they felt themselves sold. I beckoned them towards the building, but they retreated with expressions of scorn. No doubt in the Motu tongue they were calling me "Fraud" and "Dead beat." I could only understand the emphatic "*Lasi, lasi!*" (No, no!)

It was eight years since the church here was erected. It is a large, high building, with a frame of heavy posts and rafters, the sides and roof being of grass and palm-leaves. The floor is a few feet above the ground. A rail at one end encloses a small platform, on which was a reading desk. Here, too, were a couple of benches and two or three chairs. The body of the building,

however, was bare. Around the walls were hung a few common school object-lesson appurtenances, maps, &c. There were about seventy children present. All were very young, though there were a few girls approaching maturity. They were divided into nine classes. The male and female Polynesian teachers set a good example by their dress. One or two Papuans who had classes were, however, quite naked. The course of instruction was in reading and writing of a very primitive kind. The teacher, squatted on the floor in the centre of the class, listened to the alphabet or words of one syllable repeated alternately by the children around. In the higher "forms" short sentences were being read, which were all of a Scriptural character. Around Port Moresby the bringing up in the fear of the Lord was the beginning of all education. The writing on slates was of the rudest kind, though one or two could form their letters decently. The only school book was a primer containing the alphabet, numerals, a few words and sentences, the ten commandments, and some hymns.

On Sunday morning the bell not only went for matins, but afterwards at nine o'clock for the first native service. As we strolled along the beach we found the women hard at work making pottery. The men of Anuapata were leaning against anything handy, and looked sleepy, as if they had made an orthodox Anglo-Saxon Saturday night of it. So indeed they had, for there was high revel and rejoicing at the return of the trading fleet of *lakatois* the previous day. They had gorged themselves with kangaroo meat and fish, yam, taro, and sago. The bamboo pipe had gone round until a late hour, while the women sang the Motu version of "Our Jack's come home to-day." The men were perfectly satisfied. Whilst they were recovering from their debauch and the toil of their voyage the women were hard at work. Doubtless, more orders for *uras* and *hordus* had come from along the coast, and they were hastening to get the pottery ready for another voyage before the approaching season of the rains and the monsoons. However, if *laborare est orare*, these Anuapata women were praying to very good purpose. I did not despise them as I passed by to church.

In the afternoon we attended the native service. The congregation numbered about one hundred all told—men, women, and children of Anuapata, Tanapata, and Ilavara. As usual in more

civilised climes, the female sex slightly predominated. There were not many young unmarried girls present. In New Guinea there are no old maids. Woman there fulfils her mission. At maturity she is married, and has no time afterwards to speculate on her rights or her wrongs. There is a very small amount of beauty distributed amongst them. On benches in the front row were the Polynesian teachers, headed by Ruatoka; with them sat old Boe Vagi, custodian of the Union Jack, who had donned his coat for the occasion. The flowing white robes and coquettish straw hats of the South Sea women were in strong contrast to the utter nakedness which prevailed in the background, as much as their long jet-black hair was to the crisp wool of the Motu girls. I dare say these latter admired and envied the teacher's handsome wife, who was sitting beside me, and who, when a breeze for a moment blew aside her skirts, covered her bare feet and ankles with as much skittish coquetry as a Broadway belle, or a ballet-girl off the stage. The young maidens of Port Moresby might look on these robes and hats as the reward of virtue and belief. If they followed the missionary teaching, they too might in time receive presents of gorgeous headgear. The Motu, male and female, is akin to the daughter of the horse-leech, and is always "on the make." When this church was first opened, I understand that a little feast was held, rice and biscuit being given to all comers. Many, I was told, came there every Sunday in anticipation of a renewal of this interesting ceremony. It was always hope deferred with them.

The faithful church members and communicants were all gathered together in the front. Tanapata, being nearest to the mission, sent the largest number of adherents. I will not say that it was because these people had received the largest share of tobacco that they were the most regular in attendance. Mr. Chalmers, the masterful, and Ruatoka had great personal influence over these men. The mission was certainly "boss" at this end of Port Moresby, if the *Argus* camp ruled at the other. The faithful set an example of order, which was fairly copied by the naked little rascals who were squatted together at the end of the building. About nine per cent. of the population around was gathered there: that was as good an average of church attendance as you would find in many large civilised cities. But I dare say in a few more years all Port Moresby will attend church.

The great difficulty was in persuading these Motus to keep holy the Sabbath day, after the strict rule the Protestant missionaries have everywhere established. Those Motu women working hard at the other end of Anuapata, to complete the order for crockery for Kabadi, would not for a long time be brought to believe that they were doing anything sinful in thus toiling for themselves and their families.

Mr. Lawes conducted the whole service. We had hymns, Scripture reading, prayers, and sermon in "Motu Gado." The congregation appeared to be impressed. If there was a chewing of betel-nut in the back seats, if some of the boys laughed and played with any strange insect they could capture, there was little to be surprised at. Mr. Lawes, in his cool white costume, impressed me. The liquid vowels of the native tongue sounded well in song and prayer. He read part of the Sermon on the Mount. I wondered much if these people could understand the blessings which would descend on the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, and the peacemaker. We of the conquering white race, have we recognised, do we follow out the Divine precepts enunciated in the fifth chapter of Matthew? Afterwards the sacrament of bread and cocoanut-milk was handed round by the teachers, and received and taken as reverently by the forty communicants as by any congregation in any church in the world. This ceremony aroused considerable curiosity and excitement in the back seats; there was jealousy and envy amongst the non-church-members that those in the front should receive even the small crumb of bread. There was a craning of necks, and a slight confusion. "Where are yer shoving to?" "What der yer mean?" was audibly uttered in Motu, and Ruatoka and Boe had to get up and call out, "Order!" This was soon restored, and we got on to the sermon.

A very admirable sermon this appeared to be; not at all dull, but, by the attention displayed, having an effect on the front rows at least. It was figurative, and argumentative, as I often heard the word "*Lasi!*" (No!) I could not understand any more, but I watched the faces of the disciples. They were occasionally lighted up with a spark of intelligence, although the teacher's wife next to me was principally occupied arranging her skirts. But could these people understand what is as yet a deep mystery to so many of us? Was it or was it not time wasted?

Anyhow, I wish the missionaries every success in inculcating the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount. They are fortunate that they have hitherto had the field to themselves, and that there has been no other Christian sect in New Guinea to weaken their hands in the struggle for the soul of the heathen by foolish debates and wranglings upon forms and ceremonies. In this respect, the Motu worshipper in Port Moresby is to be envied by many church-goers in civilised cities.

A Polynesian teacher, "Peri," and old Ruatoka had been great supports to Messrs. Lawes and Chalmers. Peri had done some civilising missionary work of a kind which I like. He was known all along the coast of New Guinea for having introduced the sweet potato, which the natives call after him. Rua and Peri were the oldest Polynesian teachers in New Guinea, where so many had perished by fever. Mr. Chester, who is a particular friend of the missionaries, said in an official report:—"It is melancholy to think of the number of good men who have been sacrificed since the commencement of the New Guinea mission. These poor fellows are brought from their pleasant island homes in a delightful climate, dropped here and there along an unhealthy coast, and left to their fate until it is convenient for the *Ellangowan* to visit them. If the place proved healthy, well and good; if otherwise, their places were supplied by fresh arrivals. Their pay is £15 a year, out of which they have to clothe and feed themselves, build houses, and buy land to cultivate. In an unhealthy climate like this, men require something more than cocoanuts and yams to support life; and these teachers ought to be supplied with meat, flour, tea, and sugar. They are the true heroes of the mission, but at the May meetings at Exeter Hall who hears their names?"

I cannot quite agree with this. As I have before pointed out, these native teachers do not anticipate death or martyrdom, but owing to the profession being overstocked in Samoa and the Loyalties, come to New Guinea to get an "opening." They occupy privileged positions, and I am informed are now paid £20 a year, which, with the produce of their gardens, and with pigs and fowls, certainly places them in a very good position. The true heroes of the mission I imagine to be my white brethren, who are working so hard for the future in the distance, which I am afraid will never come. However, let me do the

native teachers every justice. Mr. Lawes said of some new arrivals at Port Moresby that they were "full of enthusiasm, and eager to begin work." "New stations," he said, "are to be taken up east and west, and as soon as the re-occupation of Kalo—where the teachers were massacred three years ago—was proposed, several candidates were at once eager in their offers of service. None of the recent arrivals will, however, go to new places until they are somewhat acclimatised. All are well supplied with quinine, and there is quite a fleet of boats at their service in the different stations, so that the mission in these days is on a far better sanitary footing than in former times."

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### THE PRESENT SITUATION.

Lack of space unfortunately prohibits me from dealing further with my adventures round Port Moresby, on the coasts of New Guinea, and in the various islands of the Gulf of Papua, or from referring to the cannibals on the adjacent islands of New Britain, New Ireland, and the Solomons. Of the latter, Mr. Hugh Romilly, Ex-Deputy-Commissioner of the Western Pacific, has given us the latest information in a book published by him just recently. I refer my readers to the accompanying map showing the different possessions of Britain, France, and Germany, in the Western Pacific; which will explain, better perhaps than any description, the present situation.

I have entirely failed if, in the preceding pages, my readers will not have gathered some idea of the danger to Britain and to Australia which has grown up, in the *decadence of British interests in the Western Pacific*. To thoroughly understand the present situation, one must slightly refer to the past. As regards the New Hebrides, my despatches to the journal which I have the honour to represent—the *Melbourne Argus*—first drew attention to the *coup* intended to be effected by the annexation of these islands, and the transportation thither of the *récidivistes*. For three years the Australian colonists have been agitating on this subject. We are united in our anxiety that the future well-being of our children shall not be endangered by the influx of the scum of France, who, as I have pointed out, will be allowed to swoop down on Australia, but are prohibited from returning to the land of their fathers. The New Hebrides question, according to the theory of the Colonial Office officials, remains *in statu quo*, the agreement entered into in 1878 between France and England for the autonomy of their islands being in full force. But France has annexed the New Hebrides *de facto*, if not *de jure*. I have shown how the New Hebrides Company have acquired land from the natives,

and have set up bogus and fictitious interests in the islands—interests which will be worth nothing, unless the transportation of the *récidivistes* is carried into effect. Posts of French soldiers have been established on the New Hebrides; the French flag has been raised there; and the natives have been taught to believe that the *Man-a-Wee-wee* holds the supreme power. But for the vigorous protests of the colony of Victoria, one may be sure that the action of the French commander at Vaté, or Sandwich Island, would have been officially endorsed by his Government. But the fact remains that the French have invaded the New Hebrides, and are making war upon the natives, who detest them, and who, poll the inhabitants of the islands of the Pacific, would gladly welcome and call for the rule of Great Britain as opposed to that of France.

Not only is the possession of the New Hebrides a question of the increase of a comparatively free criminal population near the shores of Australia, but reference to the map will show that these islands are but a link in the chain which, from New Guinea to the Solomons, with Santa Cruz, and so on to New Caledonia, form outposts separating Australia from the Eastern Pacific, coigns of vantage which, in the possession of foreign Powers, cannot but prove a source of danger to the future welfare of Australia and the Empire. These islands of the Western Pacific lie in the direct track between the terminus of the newly-opened Canadian Pacific Railway at Vancouver, and the northern part of Australia. This new ocean route, which is one that can be taken entirely under the British flag, with the Panama Canal, which some day may be completed, will revolutionise to a great extent the traffic between Great Britain and Australia. The ocean highway should be kept clear of any foreign toll-bars thereon. War nowadays, we are often told, is merely a question of coal and coaling stations, and so many of these islands are of the greatest importance to us in Australia as coal depôts for steam traffic with the Eastern Pacific ports.

In this connection, the recent reported annexation by Great Britain of the Ellice Islands is of the greatest moment. For once the Home authorities appear to have realised the situation; but should there be any disturbance in future with either Germany or France, the occupation of the Ellice Islands

will be neutralised by the Germans being in possession of the larger portion of the Solomons, and by the French in New Caledonia and the New Hebrides, should they be allowed to retain possession of the latter. Since I have been in England I have been taunted, as an Australian by adoption, with what is styled the absurd scare which we, in the Colonies, have at the presence of a foreign flag near our shores. We are told that there is no danger to us now. One of the most prominent of English statesmen said to me, "Do you think we would quarrel with Bismarck just to please Australia? There is no danger of our having trouble with Germany which will affect you in the future." To this I replied in the words of Lord Tennyson, written at the inauguration of the volunteer movement in Great Britain in 1857:

> "It is true that we have a faithful ally,
> But only the devil knows what he means."

As regards the Western Pacific, England and Germany have not an alliance, but a definite treaty, a treaty made without reference to the expressed desires of the majority of Australians, a treaty which involved the degradation of the acts of a Pro-Consul of Her Majesty being neutralised, and the hauling down of the British flag which, in 1883, had been hoisted over New Guinea and the adjacent islands, between the 141st and 155th meridians of east longitude. As I have before pointed out, this act of Sir Thomas M'Ilwraith, then Premier of Queensland, received the official approbation of Sir Arthur Kennedy, then Governor. Yet Lord Derby, Colonial Secretary for the time being, repudiated the act, on the ground that the apprehension entertained in Australia that a foreign Power would establish itself on the shores of New Guinea appeared altogether unfounded. It was expressly stated that Germany, which was reported to have an eye on New Guinea, had no intention of settling there. It was also stated that it would be considered an unfriendly act by Her Majesty's Government if such settlement took place. Yet, a few months afterwards, Germany formally annexed the north-eastern portion of New Guinea, which (according to the accounts of the few travellers who have been there) is by far the most valuable and productive, as also

New Britain and New Ireland. These islands are now included in the "Bismarck Archipelago," and north-east of New Guinea is now "Kaiser Wilhelm's Land." There is a German baron appointed as Governor of this territory, and a German line of steamers is started to run to Australia in connection with the German traders in the Western Pacific. The practical English trader and manufacturer will see how British trading interests are being sacrificed, by the commerce being diverted from England and Australia to Germany. This annexation by Germany was agreed to without protest, and by a treaty signed in Berlin on the 6th of April, 1886, by Sir Edward Baldwin Malet, Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, and Count Herbert Bismarck, His Imperial Majesty's Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, it was agreed that Germany should not only take Kaiser Wilhelm's Land and the Bismarck Archipelago, but also the larger part of the Solomon Islands, the Marshall Islands, and many others in the Western Pacific, as shown by the "conventional line of demarcation" on the accompanying map.

Two clauses of this treaty deserve attention.

"Clause 3. Germany engages not to make acquisitions of territory, accept Protectorates, or interfere with the extension of British influence, and to give up any acquisition of territory or Protectorates already established, in that part of the Western Pacific lying to the east, south-east, or south of that conventional line.

"Clause 4. Great Britain engages not to make acquisitions of territory, accept Protectorates, or interfere with the extension of German influence, and to give up any acquisitions of territory or Protectorates already established, in that part of the Western Pacific lying to the west, north-west, or north of the said conventional line."

Samoa and Tonga are specified as neutral regions. But, as shown, the German trading influence since the days of the Godeffroys, the South Sea kings, has been predominant in those islands, and one may be sure that Germany will look after the interests of its traders there.

There has been a strange jugglery of interests in the discussion and correspondence which has taken place regarding the desired annexation of New Guinea and the Islands of the

Western Pacific by the majority of the Australian people. In the New Hebrides, the Presbyterian missionaries have cried out for the protection of England as against the Marist priests. In New Guinea, the missionaries threw cold water upon annexation, because they had the field there entirely to themselves, and they did not desire the influx of any white men who might interfere with their spiritual labours amongst the Papuans. I strongly support the missionaries of my own race against those of France, or the traders of Germany. But a knowledge of this subject forces me to the conclusion that the missionaries themselves are very much to blame for the decadence of English interests in the Western Pacific. The outcry which they have raised, through that powerful body known as "Exeter Hall," with reference to the presumed outrages of labour vessels, and the general immorality of the British trader in the Western Pacific, has been the cause of this. In this respect the missionary efforts, aided by those of Sir Arthur Gordon, when he was High Commissioner of the Western Pacific, tended to oust nearly every one of British blood, and to leave the field open to the French and the Germans, who have taken full advantage of the opportunity. Our missionary friends will find out that the present state of the cannibals whom they are trying to convert, is far worse than it ever was even in the worst days of the labour traffic. The islanders of the Solomons and the New Hebrides, carried away to work on German plantations at Samoa, and Tonga, and New Guinea, or by the French to New Caledonia and the New Hebrides, will be treated far differently to what they were in Fiji and Queensland; where, in spite of all that has been written, I, who have visited so many plantations, assert that the ex-cannibal is comparatively well treated, and that the charges of ill-usage against the Queensland planters are grossly exaggerated, the exaggerations having been made in many instances from purely political motives. After my voyage in the labour vessel *Lizzie,* I visited the boys on the plantations at the Herbert River. I tracked them from their native homes to their sphere of labour in Northern Queensland. I found them contented and well fed, and I believe in better case than half the agricultural population of Europe.

At the present moment, there is a strong and growing sentiment in favour of what is known as Imperial Federation. We

of British blood are all invited to "clasp hands across the sea." I and many other Australian colonists do not exactly know on what lines this Imperial Federation is to be carried out, or what is to follow the clasping of the hands. If aid of any sort is demanded from Australia, the Ministers of the Government of Great Britain should give a proof of their desire to aid us. We called out loudly against the German acquisition of territory near our shores. We still call out loudly against the further extension of the French possessions in the Western Pacific. I would wish to point out that this should not be looked upon entirely from an Australian point of view. The map will show better than words, how through the presence of France and Germany close to our shores, we, in the event of war, are prohibited from rendering the Mother Country that help which so many people in England think that we shall send to her. We, in consequence, are compelled to increase our coast defences and defence forces. It is true that Great Britain keeps several men-of-war on the Pacific station; but this is done, not to protect the shores of Australia, but to guard the millions of pounds' worth of British shipping and commerce between the Colonies and the Mother Country. We ask for no help from England. We will protect our own doors; but we call upon our Motherland to keep clear the ocean highway in which she herself is so vitally interested. The Hon. James Service the other day put it to the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, whether an arrangement could not be made to buy out or to give exchange for the French and German possessions in the Western Pacific. So long as these flags are near our shores, we shall not be satisfied; and until in this respect Great Britain aids us, there will be a bar to a thorough Imperial Federation. For myself, I believe, first, in Australian Federation—the political unity of the Colonies, which will make us more powerful for defence and for offence. Looking into the far future I see the time, not of which the poet wrote—

"When the war-drums throbbed no longer, and the battle-flags were furled,
In the Parliament of men, the Federation of the world—"

but of a grand Federation of the whole English-speaking race, when cannibals and convicts will have disappeared from the

South Seas; when our dear old Motherland, with her eldest-born, the United States of America, and the Dominions of Canada and Australia, peopled by millions all bone of one bone, and flesh of one flesh, shall be joined together heart in heart and hand in hand, and shall be so mighty in war that they can impose peace upon the nations of the world.

THE END.

# APPENDIX.

THIS is a copy of the Petition referred to in Chapter XXIII. The original was sent by the author to the Marquis of Normanby, the late Governor of Victoria, who presented it to Her Majesty when he returned to England, and it was duly acknowledged through the Colonial Office:—

TO HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY VICTORIA, QUEEN OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND, EMPRESS OF INDIA.

We, the undersigned Chiefs of the Island of Tanna, in the New Hebrides, hereby petition your Majesty:—

1. We speak for ourselves, the tribes over which we rule, and we believe for every man in Tanna, when we pray—
2. That your Majesty will grant us due protection against the proposed annexation of our Island by the French Government.
3. We are strongly opposed to any dealings with Frenchmen, and if they take possession of Tanna it will be by force of arms, and against our will.
4. We like the English people with whom we have had dealings for years, with English ships and captains, with English settlers and traders here, and with English missionaries, whom we respect. And as very many of us have served as "indentured labourers" in the Australian Colonies, we understand the English language, and can enter into communication with your people.
5. If our Island is to be annexed by any civilised Power, we would prefer it to be annexed to the Australian Colonies.

And your petitioners will ever pray.

[HERE FOLLOW THE MARKS OF 68 CHIEFS.]

Dated at Tanna the month of September, 1883.

Witnesses to the marks of the above Chiefs of Tanna to this Petition, the same having been first read over, translated, and thoroughly explained to them.

JULIAN THOMAS,
*Special Correspondent of the Melbourne "Argus."*

And at various times and places

THE REV. W. WATT, Kwamera.
THE REV. W. GREY, Waisesi.
GOTTFREY KYHN, Trader, Port Resolution.

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